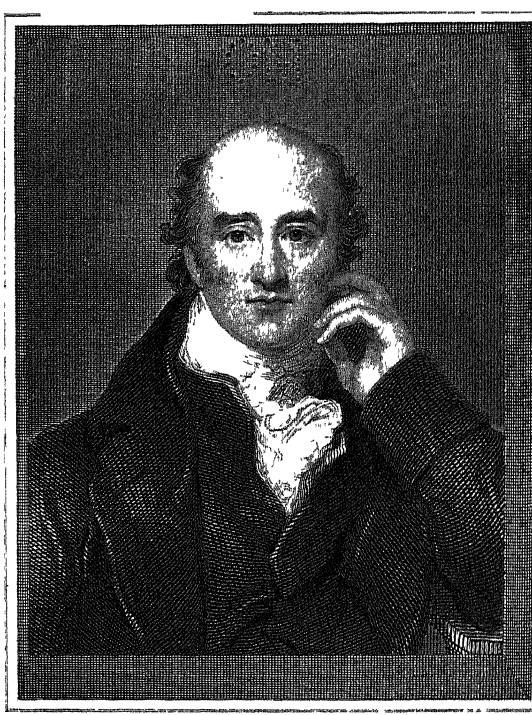
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THE Rt HON. G. CANNING,

Principal Secretary of State for

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

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November, 1822

London, Published by J & J Allman Princes Street, Hanover Squ.r 1823

THE

BRITISH ESSAYISTS;

WITH

PREFACES

BIOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL,

AND CRITICAL,

BY THE

REV. LIONEL THOMAS BERGUER,

LATE OF ST. MARY HALL, OXON: FELLOW EXTRAORDINARY OF THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

IN FORTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

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NAMES OF THE AUTHORS,

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SPECIFICATION OF THE NUMBERS OR PARTS

WRITTEN BY EACH.

Mr. J. SMITH, No. 1, the Prose part of 5, 10, 23, 27, and 37.

Mr. CANNING, No. 2, Poetry in 5; No. 7, 11, 12, 18, 22, 26, 30, 32, 39, and part of 40.

Mr. R. SMITH, No. 3, 8, 13, 19, 20, 24, 28, 31, 33, and 40 in conjunction with Mr. CANNING.

Mr. FRERE, No. 4, 9, 16, 25, and 35.

Lord HENRY SPENCER, Letter and Poem signed Ironiculus, No. 15, and the Letter of Σοφος Πολυφαγος, No. 36.

Mr. WAY, Letter signed Musidorus, No. 6.

Mr. LITTLEHALES, Letter signed Cœmeterius, No. 14.

* Mr. CAPEL LOFT, Letter signed an Etonian, No. 36.

Mr. MELLISH, No. 38.

UNKNOWN.—Octavius, Observator, in No. 6; A Country Girl, 14; Alfred, Christopher Cutjoke, 15; Arthur Cassock, Etonensis, 17; L. 21; Vir Bonus, 29, and 34.

* In an Etonian's Letter, No. 36, we are proud of confessing the assistance of a name so respected in the literary world, as Mr. CAPEL LOFT, to whom, as an accident put it out of our power on a former occasion, we take this opportunity of acknowledging the obligation.

*

MICROCOSM.

No. 1—40.

Quid vetat et nosmet.—Hor.

*

BIOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND CRITICAL

PREFACE

TO

THE MICROCOSM.

THE BRITISH ESSAYISTS, in a corporate form, such as they are here presented, to all appearance are an interminable work. Ever and anon, at irregular intervals, they receive the accession of some unexpected volume; like an ingot tossed into the national treasury, that at once imperceptibly augments its bulk, and enhances its value.

The expiration of the long term of copyright, secured to its original proprietors by act of parliament, has at length rendered the MICROCOSM public property; and while we now, for the first time, incorporate it into this collection, we cannot silently conduct our distinguished contemporary to the pedestal which has been kept vacant for his occupation.

If there be critics who would eject this volume from the station which is here assigned it, because of the juvenility of the writers, they are neither to be envied for their fastidiousness, nor complimented for their discrimination. The mind that cannot brook to contemplate unfolding genius, will hardly sympathize with it in its full expansion: the cold-

ness necessary to turn away from its young aspirations, would scarcely be thawed by the fires of its perfected excellence. That the MICROCOSM is embodied in this edition, upon the principle of its own positive merits, and as a successful follower in the steps of its accomplished prototypes, without any reference to the age of the producing parties, is by no means affirmed. It cannot be expected that boys at sixteen should write like men at thirty; but when boys at sixteen erect for themselves a monument like the MICROCOSM, though the fabric here and there betray the inexperience of the architects, it is no less the duty, than it is the interest of the country, to take care both of the building and the builders.

In 1786 an association was formed at Eton College, by *five* individuals, most distinguished for their literary enthusiam and attainments, to undertake something

> —— Insigne, recens—adhuc
> Indictum ore alio :—

at least, in the annals of that foundation. They projected and put forth the MICROCOSM. The first number made its appearance on Monday the 6th of November; and it was thenceforward published regularly once a week, until Monday, July 30, 1787. GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq. its editor, who closes his periodical labours by a fictitious death, leaves behind him a *last will and testament*, in which are humorously introduced—as his legatees—the names of the five associates, and their respective contributions allotted to each for his inheritance.

The papers designated by the letter A. were

furnished by Mr. JOHN SMITH, afterwards of King's College, Cambridge; those that were marked B. are appropriated to GEORGE CANNING; C. was the signature of Mr. ROBERT SMITH; D. of Mr. JOHN FRERE, and M. of Mr. JOSEPH MELLISH.

Mr. B. WAY contributed *Musidorus*, and Mr. LITTLEHALES *Cemeterius*. The letter and poem of *Ironiculus*, and also the letter of Σοφος Πολυφαγος, were from the pen of Lord HENRY SPENCER. But upon the authors, distinguished by the first four letters of the alphabet, rested the entire conduct and responsibility of the work.

From these, for a *very* short biographical sketch, we shall select GEORGE CANNING only; not that his colleagues are unworthy of a like attention, but because the time for publication presses, and the necessary materials and *data* are not at hand.

The Right Honourable GEORGE CANNING, who is descended from a very ancient Irish family, was born in London, in the Spring of 1771. His father, the late GEORGE CANNING, Esq. came over at an early period to push his fortunes in England, and never afterwards recrossed the channel. He had offended his parents by marrying a dowerless beauty, but gifted with many graces and accomplishments; and whose ample share of the *dos magna parentium*, sufficiently compensated for her want of portion. Upon a very restricted allowance, the effect of this displeasure, Mr. CANNING had to fight his way through the world. He did this honourably and successfully; and he is yet remembered, as a poet of no mean reputa-

tion in his day. He was a barrister, and member of the society of benchers of the Middle Temple; and throughout his able and useful career he frequently distinguished himself, alike forensically and through the press, by his patriotic advocacy of public liberty. Mr. CANNING died on the 11th of April, 1771, soon after the subject of our present memoir was born.

The care of young CANNING's education now devolved upon his paternal uncle, a merchant of great respectability in London. It is immaterial to know at what precise period he was sent to Eton, but of his early ambition and pre-eminence, the MICROCOSM is at once an evidence and a date. In the papers which are distinguished by his mark, the promise that has been since matured is discoverable in every page. Pungent raillery and keen ridicule, irony, sarcasm, and satire,

All the edge tools of eloquence and wit

—such as he brandishes now with equal power and playfulness, were to be augured from these productions.

Mr. CANNING's papers in the MICROCOSM, are Nos. 2, 7, 11, 12, 18, 22, 26, 30, 32, 39, and part of 40. At the end of No. 5, also, he contributed a poem, entitled *The Slavery of Greece*, which at this moment, and from such a pen, is interesting in no common degree. The love of freedom which breathes throughout this generous effusion, and the passionate recollection with which he dwells on the ancient glories of that fallen empire, do equal honour to his understanding and his heart: but he looks through the vista of years dejectedly

for Greece, and without hope; for the dawn of her RENOVATION—which, events were even *then* accelerating, had not yet burst upon the young eye of our sorrowing enthusiast.

In 1788, on his removal from Eton, Mr. CANNING was entered of Christ Church, Oxford, where he completed his necessary residence, and graduated. At the university he acquired great fame for the elegance of his Latin poetry, and was much admired for the beauty and brilliancy of his declamations. Admitted to his bachelor's degree, Mr. CANNING, like his father, began his career in the law; and was associated, also, like him, of the honourable society of the Middle Temple. But he was shortly to make his entrance upon a yet more important theatre; for in 1793, he was returned to parliament for Newton, in the Isle of Wight. Mr. CANNING made his political *début* under the auspices of Mr. PITT; and so great were the expectations entertained from his eloquence and his abilities, that Sir RICHARD WORSLEY, at the solicitation of the minister, vacated his seat, to make room for the new acceder.

At this era, we stop short in our imperfect biography. Our business has been with the essayist, and is not with the politician. We have followed Mr. CANNING to his brilliant starting point, and there we take our leave. While we do this, however, we cannot but be struck with some strong coincidental resemblances, in the lives of ADDISON and CANNING. They have both pursued the double career of letters and of politics, and the helm of government has been confided to the guidance of each. As an essayist, there can obviously

be no comparison between the first *essor* of a writer yet in his tyrocinium, and the productions of an accomplished and travelled scholar. As a poet, judging from the scanty specimens which have gone abroad, the palm of a happier taste, and superior powers, both imaginatively and in execution, might be plausibly disputed for CANNING; though, during his nolition to enter the lists, the scales of excellence must preponderate on the side of *Cato*. But as an orator and a statesman, the modern ADDISON immeasurably transcends his prototype. His speeches in the house have long stood alone for their purity of language, and bursts of extemporaneous energy; while his prodigal command of metaphor, never inappropriately nor ineffectively introduced, has frequently confounded all parties in one common admiration.

Mr. CANNING's accession to power at this eventful crisis, constitutes an era in the history of our foreign politics; and the unrivalled elegance of his state papers, will cause them to be referred to, in after times, as models of literary composition.

It is impossible to close this memoir, without inserting one paragraph from a powerful political writer, too descriptive to be resisted; particularly, as the deforming genius of party-spirit has not entered once, throughout the whole passage, to mar a portrait touched off with unparalleled fidelity and happiness.

'In the year 1799, Mr. CANNING married a Miss SCOTT, whose sister, about the same time, was married to the then Marquis of TITCHFIELD, now Duke of PORTLAND. These ladies, who had very large fortunes, were the daughters of a

General Scott, of whom I have never heard any thing other than that he got his money in the East Indies. I saw Mrs. CANNING not long after her marriage, and could easily believe, that her fortune, large as it was, had not gained her her husband; for she was a very pretty, gentle, and amiable woman. To be sure, there did require something in personal merits to meet those of the husband; for he, according to my judgment, was the very handsomest man I ever saw in my life. Not a "*pretty man,*" not a "*beauty,*" not a doll-faced dandy; but sufficiently tall, sufficiently stout, his limbs all at command, his step quick and firm, his voice sound and harmonious, his utterance quick and distinct, his emphasis strong without effort, his hair dark, his eyes bright without being *sharp;* and, what above all things I admire, a set of features every one of which performed its part in telling you what was passing in the mind.

'How often have I, when reading his speeches, brought him back to my mind! In about twenty-two years I have seen him but *twice;* once in 1817, and once lately. He is grown stouter, and somewhat stiffer in his movements; he has lost the hair on the top of his head; but his eyes and all his features are nearly the same as ever; his voice is what it was; his habits of sobriety give him vigour, and, in all probability, will give him long life.'

Whether the palm for masterliness of delineation belong to this portrait, or that by the PRESIDENT of the ROYAL ACADEMY; whether the triumph, in this instance, ought to be accorded to the pen, or the pencil, were an immaterial decision: but

none, we are sure, will dispute, that they are exquisite illustrations of each other.

Of the serious papers in the MICROCOSM, there are many with the signatures of A., C., and D., which are far above mediocrity; and indeed, the whole volume teems with entertainment and ability.

It would be unjust to send forth this edition of the BRITISH ESSAYISTS, without mentioning the MINIATURE and the ETONIAN, two worthy successors of GREGORY GRIFFIN at Eton, and the heirs of his talents and his celebrity. Of the last, which was published in 1821, a high character has already appeared in the principal journals, which a perusal by no means belies; and it claims to rank, undisparaged, by the side of much maturer productions.

Of the MINIATURE, whose authors were contemporary at Eton with the writer of this article, it may suffice to observe, that it has trodden successfully, though perhaps with too much palpable *external* imitation, in the footsteps of its ingenious predecessor.

But though the MINIATURE, like the MICROCOSM, is restricted to *forty* numbers, the departure of Mr. SOLOMON GRILDRIG, its editor, is a paper of great elegance and originality, and managed very differently from the catastrophe of GREGORY GRIFFIN. This number, and the one preceding, in which GRILDRIG recounts the history of his birth and education, are pieces of perfect Addisonian humour.

The MINIATURE was planned by THOMAS

RENNELL, the eldest son of the dean of Winchester, now vicar of Kensington, and chaplain to the bishop of SALISBURY; and by STRATFORD CANNING, sometime minister in Switzerland, but now a member of the privy-council, and our ambassador to the United States. To these original projectors, acceded immediately RICHARD WELLESLEY, eldest son of the MARQUIS, and now a member of the House of Commons; and GALLEY KNIGHT, who has already served in parliament, and is since extensively known in the literary world for his elegant poetical productions. It would be difficult to select four names, of a parallel standing in life, more distinguished for various literature than these.

Mr. RENNELL is one of the profoundest theologians of the age, and as a scholar, *facilè inter principes Græcorum:* and the universal accomplishments and genius of STRATFORD CANNING, shed a lustre even upon the name he bears.

His saltem—from *these*, I could not refrain: let the imperfect tribute be pardoned by my bright contemporaries*.

* It is curiously worthy of remark that the *bouts rimés*, which were printed the other day in the celebrated *Recueil*, entitled the LIBERAL, are an idea borrowed from the MICROCOSM. Turn to the very humorous paper, signed D. No. 35.—Having just heard that the principal writers in the ETONIAN are graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, and between twenty-four and twenty-eight years of age, what we have remarked on that paper above —as one of the ETON Essayists—may be considered as cancelled. —ED.

THE

MICROCOSM.

N° 1. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1786.

Protinus Italiam concepit, et arma virumque,
Qui modo vix culicem fleverat ore rudi.—MARTIAL.

HE, who a gnat had wept with artless tongue,
'ARMS AND THE MAN' in loftier numbers sung.

IT has often been observed, that an introduction is the part of a work the most embarrassing to the author, as well as the least entertaining to the reader. I have frequently wished that custom, or a literary etiquette, had prescribed some form so general, as to preclude the idea of plagiarism, while it secured the author from the apprehension of misrepresenting himself to the world; as for instance,

TO
THE MOST HIGH AND PUISSANT CRITICS
BY THE
SUFFERANCE OF THEIR SUBJECTS,
OF WIT, POETRY, AND HUMOUR, KINGS,
DEFENDERS OF TASTE,
THE MICROCOSMOPOLITAN SENDS GREETING,
&c. &c. &c.

Next to this, the method almost universally adopted by periodical writers, of usurping a feigned name and character, is perhaps the most eligible; the dignity of the author is not diminished by the egotisms of Isaac Bickerstaff, and the man with a short face

reflects no portion of the ridiculous in his character on Steele or Addison.

Thus then I, GREGORY GRIFFIN, sally forth in this *our* lesser world, to pluck up by the roots the more trifling follies, and cherish the opening buds of rising merit.

It is the duty of a prudent general, before he hazards an engagement, to secure a safe retreat; why should a similar conduct be less defensible in an author? And now a conjecture there is, very likely to have arisen in the minds of my readers, and which they will wonder I have not answered before; namely, who I AM; Now as nothing is more painful than an ungratified desire of knowledge, I would advise my readers to repress and smother in its infancy this unhappy passion of inquisitiveness; as, whatever be the success of this my work, such precautions have been taken with regard to myself, as shall elude all the efforts of inquiry, and baffle all the arts of curiosity. Suffice it, that I boast with them of '*sucking the milk of Science*' from our mother Eton, under the auspices of its present director; to whom (should this work ever be deemed worthy of so distinguished a patronage), I would wish to presume to look up for countenance and protection. But to proceed in the explanation of my design. As this attempt may have raised some degree of curiosity within the circle to which it is addressed, as it is in itself new and unprecedented in the annals of Eton, I think it incumbent on me, before I proceed any farther, to give an ample account of its scope and design; that the reader may be fully acquainted with the nature of the amusement or instruction he may expect to find; and that I may obviate any objections, which I foresee will arise to this undertaking. These I shall rank under the following heads; —the age of the author, —the time it may take from his more serious avocations,—and the tendency of the work itself.

When the respectable names of the Spectator, the Guardian, or the Rambler, recur to our memory, we start, and are astonished at the presumption of a *puny authorling*, who dares, at so early an age, tread in the steps of these heroes of wit and literature. No one can suppose, that it is my intention to affect to rival these illustrious predecessors. All that I can claim, is a sincere desire of executing that design in a narrower sphere, which they sustained with such applause in the wider theatre of the world. My ambition, I hope, is not illaudable; and if an apology is necessary for so early an attempt, I can plead the great examples both of ancient and modern learning: Virgil and Pope produced their Pastorals long before the one became the glory of Rome as her epic poet, or the other of Britain, as her philosopher and satirist; if these examples are objected to, as more peculiar to poetry than prose, Cicero's Treatise de Inventione was the juvenile effort of that mind, which was in future time to point the thunders of its eloquence against the betrayers of their country; to crush the audacious villany of a Catiline; or strip the deep hypocrisy of an Antony of its specious covering. If the above-mentioned compositions were only the preludes to the greater glories of a riper age, may not I, without incurring the charge of too much presumption, try the feebler efforts of my genius, and by degrees attempt to accustom myself to undertakings of a more trying and arduous nature.

For the time which it may be thought to take from my more serious avocations, the answer will be briefly this. It only occupies a few leisure hours, which might be more triflingly, if not more unworthily employed. This is a harmless recreation at least. My only aim is, that my leisure moments may in some respects be amusing, and I hope in some degree instructive to others, as well as myself. —*Personal* reputation cannot be my object; as the

voice neither of praise or calumny can affect him, who, by remaining unknown, remains equally inaccessible to either: the friends I should gain by this attempt would be useless, the enemies (if enemies I had) harmless. Profit cannot be my object, when the circulation is confined to such a narrow compass, and even that I would not wish to enlarge; if this essay will defray the expenses incident to such an undertaking, it is the summit of my hopes, and this, by the patronage of the circle I address myself to, I flatter myself I may perform.

To explain the nature and tendency of the work itself, is a task of greater length and difficulty; but this I shall willingly undertake, rather than leave the smallest part of this design unexplained, and consequently subject to ignorant misapprehensions, or wilful misconstruction. My design is to amuse, and, as far as I am able, to instruct. Trifling I shall endeavour as much as it is in my power to avoid; and the least tendency to immorality or profaneness, I absolutely, and in the strongest terms, reprobate and disavow. Does any one ask from whence am I to collect the materials for such an undertaking? from whence can I have acquired a fund of knowledge, language, or observation, sufficient to pursue this arduous plan? my materials are copious; the whole range, the inexhaustible fund of topics, which every event in life, every passion, every object present, lie before me; add to these, the stores which history, reading, and morality, or the offspring of a muse just struggling into notice can supply, combined with the topics of the moment, or those which our peculiar situation can afford, together with the hints, which those, who think the correspondence of the Microcosm worth their attention, may casually contribute; survey all these, and can I hesitate a moment, can I complain of a dearth of matter, or call my subject a barren one?

Quicquid agunt *pueri*; nostra farrago libelli.

——————— with faithful hints portrays
The various passions youth's warm soul displays.

Not that I mean to exclude every thing of the light or humorous kind. The mind must sometimes be relieved from the severity of its stricter studies, and descending from the sublimer heights of speculative thought, deign to bend to inferior objects, and participate in less refined gratifications.

I consider the scene before me as a MICROCOSM, a world in miniature, where all the passions which agitate the great original, are faithfully portrayed on a smaller scale; in which the endless variety of character, the different lights and shades, which the appetites or peculiar situations throw us into, begin to discriminate, and expand themselves. The curious observer may here remark in the bud the different casts and turns of genius, which will in future strongly characterize the leading features of the mind. He may see the embryo statesman, who hereafter may wield and direct at pleasure the mighty and complex system of European Politics, now employing the whole extent of his abilities to circumvent his companions at their plays, or adjusting the important differences, which may arise between the contending heroes of his little circle; or a general, the future terror of France and Spain, now the dread only of his equals, and the undisputed lord and president of the boxing-ring. The Grays and Wallers of the rising generation here tune their little lyres; and he, who hereafter may sing the glories of Britain, must first celebrate at Eton the smaller glories of his college.

In the number and variety of subjects which I may occasionally touch upon, it is impossible, but that somebody may find a foible or a vanity, which he is conscious of, slightly reproved or ridiculed; but I solemnly renounce all intention of personal applica-

tions: it would not only be cruel and unwarrantable in itself, wantonly to expose defects, which all are in some measure liable to; but would also effectually defeat my own intentions. Who would favour or protect him, who, Drawcansir like, indiscriminately slashed and cut at all around him? my answer to this objection is brief,

Qui capit ille facit
Let the gall'd jade wince.

I have now fairly and candidly stated every part of my plan, and answered every objection, which I think can be raised to it: I commit this to the public, as my first essay, with fear and trembling. Conscious of the novelty of my situation, may I hope that the *higher powers* will not look with a discouraging eye on my attempt. I have always seen too much care, too much attention, paid to every appearance of application, and a laudable ambition of excelling, to suppose, that they will obstruct my harmless and inoffensive endeavours. If they find any thing blamable, let them consider my age, and pardon it; if any thing praiseworthy, the good intent with which it was penned, and commend it. From my equals I look for still greater indulgence and less severity of criticism; let them read with candour and decide with impartiality, then I am not afraid of passing the ordeal of their judgment. The mind of youth is naturally too unbiassed by prejudice, too susceptible of generous sentiments, to be unfavourable to one, whose only aim is their pleasure and amusement.

P. S. Whatever persons should be inclined to favour the author with their hints on any subject, they will be received and acknowledged with thankfulness. A letter directed to GREGORY GRIFFIN, the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN, and left at Mr.

C. KNIGHT'S, *Windsor*, will be safely delivered, and no farther inquiries made, if the parties wish to remain concealed.

N° 2. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1786.

> Jurare—et fallere Numen.—VIRGIL.
> To swear and forswear.
>
> Nec sine ulla mehercule ironia loquor.—CICERO.
> To speak ironically.

HAVING, in my former paper, fully, and I hope satisfactorily, explained the nature and tendency of this work, and as far as I could foresee them, answered, if not obviated, all the objections most likely to be started against an undertaking of the kind, I shall forbear detaining my readers by any farther prefatory observations, and proceed immediately in the execution of my plan: premising only, that, should it appear to the elder part of my readers, that the subject now before them is too lightly treated, I would not have them conclude from thence, that I am not well aware of its intrinsic weight and importance. Let them however be sensible, that *Gregory Griffin* does not, with the self-assumed arrogance of a universal censurer, commit to the public these his lucubrations as dictatorial lectures on morality, but as the reflections of an impartial observer of all transactions, principally indeed those of this *lesser world*, of which he boasts himself a citizen. These, as they afforded both entertainment and instruction to him in their formation, he presumes to hope may be the source of the one or the other to some of his readers. In this character I would wish

them to consider me in the following paper, and withal to keep in their minds a maxim, indisputable perhaps from the weight of its authority,

> ——————————Ridiculum acri
> Fortius, ac melius magnas plerumque secat res.
>
> ——————————Where moral precepts fail,
> The sneer of ridicule will oft prevail.

It has often occurred as a matter of surprise to me and a few friends, who like myself can find pleasure in such speculations as arise more immediately from common occurrences, that, among the crowds of pretenders, who profess to teach every accomplishment necessary or unnecessary, to form the character of a complete gentleman, no one has as yet attempted to give instructions in a science, the use of which is more generally adopted, by all ranks of people, than perhaps any other under the sun.—The reader will probably guess, that I allude to the noble art of SWEARING.

So universally indeed does this practice prevail, that it pervades all stations and degrees of men, from the peer to the porter, from the minister to the mechanic. It is the bond of faith, the seal of protestations (the oaths of lovers indeed are a theme too trite to need discussion here), and the universal succedaneum for logical or even rational demonstration. And here I cannot forbear reflecting on the infinite improvements made by moderns in the method of elucidating and confirming all matters of opinion. A man now-a-days has need but to acquire one quality, *impudence*, and to get rid of a troublesome companion, *conscience*, to establish whatever maxims he may take in his head. Let him but confirm with an oath the most improbable conjectures, and if any one calls his honour in question, the manner of settling all such disputes is too obvious to need explanation. And by these means how much unne-

cessary trouble does he save the rational talents of his auditors; what a world of useless investigation! Who can help lamenting that this method of arguing was not long ago adopted? We should then probably have escaped being pestered by the eternal disputations of that useless set of creatures called philosophers; as any tolerable swordsman might have settled the universal system according to his own plan, and made the planets move by what regulations he pleased, provided he was ready, in the *Newgate* phrase, '*to swear through thick and thin.*'

But this is a small part only of the advantages attendant on the extensive practices of this art. In the councils of the cabinet, and the wranglings of the bar, it adds weight to the most striking arguments, and by its authority enforces conviction.

It is an old proverbial expression, that '*there go two words to a bargain;*' now I should not a little admire the ingenuity of that calculator, who could define, to any tolerable degree of exactness, how many *oaths* go to one in these days; for I am confident, that there is no business carried on, from the wealthiest bargains of the Exchange, to the sixpenny chafferings of a St. Giles's huckster, in which swearing has not a considerable share. And almost every tradesman, '*meek and much a liar,*' will, if his veracity be called in question, coolly consign to Satan some portion of himself, *payable on demand*, in case his goods be not found answerable to his description of their quality.

I remember to have heard of a person of great talents for inquiry, who, to inform himself whether the land or the water bore the greater proportion in the globe, contrived to cut out, with extreme nicety, from a map, the different portions of each, and by weighing them together, decided it, in favour of which it is not now material:—Could this experiment be made with regard to the proportion which

oaths bear to the rest of our modern conversation, I own I am not without my suspicions, that the former scale would in some cases preponderate; nay, certain I am, that these harmless expletives constitute considerably the *weightiest* part in the discourse of those, who, either by their own ignorant vanity, or the contemptuous mock-admiration of others, have been dignified with the title of BUCKS. And this indeed, as well in that smaller circle which falls more immediately under my observation, as in the more enlarged society of *men;* among whom, to a BUCK who has the honour to serve his Majesty, a habit of swearing is an appendage as absolutely essential as a cockade or a commission: and many a one there is among this order, who will sit down with equal ardour and self-complacency, to devise the cut of a coat, or the form of an execration.

Nay, even the *female* sex have, to their no small credit, caught the *happy contagion;* and there is scarce a mercer's wife in the kingdom, but has her innocent unmeaning imprecations, her little oaths '*softened into nonsense,*' and with squeaking treble, mincing blasphemy into *odsbodikins, slitterkins*, and such-like, will '*swear you like a sucking dove, ay, an it were any nightingale.*'

That it is one of the accomplishments of *boys*, it is more than sufficiently obvious, when there is scarce one, though he be but five years old, that does not lisp out the oaths he has heard drop from the mouths of his elders; while the happy parent congratulates himself on the early improvement of his offspring, and smiles, to discover the promising seeds of manly wit in the sprightly sallies of puerile execration. On which topic I remember to have heard an honest Hibernian divine, whose zeal for morality would sometimes hurry him a little beyond the limits of good grammar, or good sense, in the height of

declamation, declare, that '*the little children, that could neither speak, nor walk, run about the streets blaspheming.*'

Thus then, through all ranks and stages of life, is Swearing the very hinge of conversation! It is the conclusive supplement to argument, the apology for wit, the universal medium through which every thought is conveyed; and as to the violent passions, it is (to use the words of the poet) '*the very midwife of the mind;*' and is equally serviceable in bringing forth the sensations of anger or kindness, hope or fear; the ecstasies of extravagant delight, or the agonies of comfortless despair. What mortal among us is there, that, when any misfortune comes on him unexpectedly, does not find himself wonderfully lightened of the load of his sorrow, by pouring out the abundance of his vexation in showers of curses on the author of his calamity? What gamester, who has reduced himself from opulence to beggary, by the intemperate indulgence of a mad infatuation, does not, after sitting down and venting his execrations for half an hour against his ill fortune and his folly, get up again greatly relieved by so happy an expedient?

Since then the advantages arising from an early initiation into the practice of swearing must so evidently appear to every person unprejudiced against it, by notions (now indeed almost out of date) of religion and morality, I cannot but be surprised, that no one has yet attempted to reduce to system, and teach the theory of an art, the practical part of which is so universally known and adopted. An undertaking of this kind could not surely fail of success; especially in an age like this, when attempts of a much more arduous nature are every day presented to our notice: when pigs are brought to exercise all the functions of rationality; and Hibernians

profess to teach the true pronunciation of the English tongue.

It is not so very far removed, but that some of my readers must recollect the time, when the noble art of *boxing* was, by the ever-memorable FIGG and BROUGHTON, reduced to a complete and perfect system; and the nobility and gentry were taught theoretically, as well as practically, to bruise the bodies, and (to use a technical term) *darken the daylights* of each other, with the vigour of a Hercules, tempered with the grace of an Apollo. And it is but a little time, since a celebrated foreigner actually instructed some persons, of no inconsiderable rank, of both sexes, in the art of *eating soup* with ease and dexterity (though in my humble opinion, few people could need a preceptor to shew them the way to their mouths).—Of much more utility, and surely not less successful, would be the plan I recommend.—Many there were, who, from tenderness of age, or delicacy of constitution, were precluded from the diversion of *boxing:* to many the science of *soup-eating* was useless and impracticable,—merely from having none to eat;—but all have their *oaths* in their own power, and of them, neither emptiness of pocket, nor corporeal or mental imbecility, prevents the free and uncontrolled use; and almost every body, however niggardly he may be in parting with any other of his possessions, scatters these with the most liberal profusion.

Thus then, if fostered by the hand of a skilful linguist, this science might perhaps in time come nearer than any other to realize the extravagant idea of the ingenious but romantic Bishop Wilkins, of a universal language. At present indeed there are some slight inconveniences attending the project, among which no small one is, that according to their present general usage, oaths, like Yorick's French Friseur, by expressing too much, generally mean

nothing; insomuch that I now make it a rule to lessen my belief to every assertion, in proportion to the number of needless corroborative oaths by which it is supported. Nor am I indeed unreasonable in this; and in most cases how can I do otherwise? Is it in human nature to suppose, that when one of my friends declares his joy at seeing me, and his kind concern for my health, by intimating a hearty wish of my eternal perdition, that he really means what he says?

It has been observed by some ancient philosopher, or poet, or moralist (no matter which), that nothing could be more pernicious to mankind, than the fulfilling of their own wishes. And in truth I am inclined to be of his opinion; for many a friend of mine, many a *fellow-citizen of this lesser world*, would, had his own heedless imprecations on himself taken effect, long ere this have groaned under the complication of almost every calamity capable of entering a human imagination. And with regard to the world at large, were this to be the case, I doubt whether there would be at this present time a leg or limb of any kind whole in his Majesty's service. So habitual indeed was this custom become to an officer of my acquaintance, that though he had lost one of his eyes in the defence of his country, he could not forego his favourite execration, but still used to vent his curses on them both, with the same ease and indifference as when they were both in his possession: so *blind* was he rendered to his own defects, by the continued practice of this—amusement. For in no other light than as an amusement or a polite accomplishment can it be considered by those who practise it. Did they consider it as a vice, they could not I am sure persevere in the indulgence of one, which has not even the common excuse of having for its aim the pursuit of pleasure, or the gratification of a darling appetite. I cannot believe

they would so disinterestedly damn themselves, and vent in public company such imprecations, as in darkness and solitude they would tremble to conceive.

As an accomplishment therefore, and as an agreeable indication of youthful gaiety, it must no doubt be considered;—and should any one take the hint here offered him, and commence instructor in this noble science, I need not, I believe, caution him against being an Englishman; or (should he have the misfortune to be born in this country) remind him of the easy transformation of our commonest homespun names, into the more fashionable French, or more musical Italian; as for instance, that of Peters into Pedro, Nicholls into Nicolini, or Gerard into Giradot, and so on.—Having thus *un-Englished* himself, let him get his advertisement drawn up in the Grahamic style, if not by the doctor himself, professing, that

'Having added to the early advantages of a Billingsgate education, the deepest researches, and most indefatigable industry, &c. &c. he now stands forth as an apt and accomplished teacher of the never-to-be-sufficiently extolled, the all-expressive, all-comprehensive, &c. &c. *Art of Swearing*. Ladies and Gentlemen instructed in the most fashionable and elegant oaths: the most peculiarly adapted to their several ages, manners, and professions, &c. &c. He has now ready for the press, a book entitled, *The Complete Oath Register; or, Every Man his own Swearer*, containing oaths and imprecations for all times, seasons, purposes, and occasions. Also, *Sentimental Oaths for the Ladies*. Likewise *Execrations for the year* 1786.'

Let him, I say, do this, and he may, I believe, assure himself of no little encouragement among the world at large; though far be it from me to presume

to promise him any extraordinary countenance in that smaller circle which comes more immediately under the inspection of the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

B.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TRANSLATICUS's request should have been immediately attended to, had not this number been previously sent to the press.—It is not in my power to insert the favour of my '*never failing*' admirer, OBADIAH MEANWELL, as the subject has been before treated of, and his allusions are too local.

N° 3. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1786.

Cessare, et ludere, et ungi.—HOR.
To lounge, and loiter, and perfume.

'DEAR GREG,

'YOUR Mic. is *dead lounge*,—dissipates insufferable *ennui* of tea-table,—fills boring intervals of *conversazione*,—exquisite substitute for switch,—and in short quite the ton:—By the by, in your next propose some new *lounge*.—They are all so *dingle* at present, they are quite a *bore*.—Lud, how much I have written!—You charming creature, hint some new lounge. Yours, NARCISSUS.'

Narcissus's billet-doux has led me into some reflections on the tenets of those philosophers (for I would not speak of so large a portion of our lesser world's inhabitants by a less respectable title), who profess in its different branches the doctrine of apathy.

We find, that the walking and sitting disputants into which the beards of Greece were divided, originated indeed from one root: but afterward branched into such innumerable little sprays, and so intersected each other, as not only to prevent all possibility of fruit, but when agitated by the least wind of contention, to fall together with a dry, offensive sort of creaking, of that kind which Virgil describes by the *Aridus Fragor*. Sensible that these disagreeable effects proceeded from a ridiculous notion which each metaphysical innovator entertained of improving on the doctrines of his predecessors (men much older, and in course much wiser, than himself), the founder of the sect of *Apathists* has condescended to borrow this opinion from the great Grecian Master, that *the end of knowledge is to be certified that we know nothing*. Upon this tenet he logically and ingeniously builds an argument, which tends to support his main principle, viz. The summit of *knowing* is to *know* that *knowledge* is a non-entity. The idea of total ignorance cannot but be grating to the pride of a human creature; Ergo, should we not at once embrace a doctrine which saves us this reflection, by teaching us to believe that we know a great deal? Now this belief is the invariable characteristic of an Apathist; for an attempt at improvement would be in him, what an acknowledgment of conviction would formerly have been considered in the Stoic.

Not however entirely to preclude the idea of study, and at the same time to point out to his followers such a kind of pursuit as should neither impair the delicacy of their external texture, or interrupt their flow of animal spirits by head-aches, vapours, and other nervous disorders (the inseparable companions of intense application), this great founder has adopted the pithy precept of a brother legislator, and enjoins his followers to *know themselves*.

—Themselves therefore, strictly obedient to this injunction, and themselves alone, they study. The vulgar herd of mortals are blinded by ambition, elated by hope, depressed by fear, melted by love, tortured by jealousy, and in short racked by all the vicissitudes of the more violent, or agitated by the quick transitions of the softer, passions. There are those who would hear of the enfranchisement of Greece, and the desolation of the Palatinate, with the same emotion; and distinguish no essential difference in the characters of Alexander and Uncle Toby; but even these would be infinitely disordered to find the economy of their apartments deranged by an unlucky kitten, almost faint at a broken pane, and be absolutely taken ill of an everted coal-box. The *genuine Apathist* alone, equally superior to the violent attacks of passion, and the teasing impertinence of fretfulness, has, notwithstanding these advantages, condescension sufficient to confine himself to the humbler sphere of the social duties; that is, he eats and drinks with the most refined politeness; and would rather forfeit his existence than be guilty of such a solecism in good breeding, as to drain a tea-pot, or replenish his own cup before those of his companions.

Not but he frequently exercises functions of a different nature, and *personates* the man of taste, the genius, and the critic (nay, there have been known those who have entertained certain vague notions of a grovelling quality called *common sense*). He has in short the reputation of being every thing, with the satisfaction of being nothing. I have known a complete adept in the external forms required on such an occasion, by one short sentence (carefully omitting the articles, pronouns, and verb substantive), establish or destroy the fame of the most capital hosiers. And any one who is acquainted with the signs whereby to distinguish them, may not unfrequently see

the most eminent among them in yawning majesty, gaping out the character of an unread author to their astonished retainers.

Wit indeed is a bagatelle for which they seem to entertain the most aversion, and to discourage not only among their own body, but in any promiscuous company into which they may chance to be thrown; and this, not by the trite path of stale dogmatical precepts, but by the more uncommon and striking method of example. And to shew how successful is this plan, I will venture to assert, that any one who should hear but a single jest of a genuine Apathist, would, for at least a week afterward, be thoroughly convinced of the impropriety of being facetious.

But as in this tenet I perfectly agree with the Apathist, that '*example strikes where precept fails*,' it will perhaps, more clearly than any description of mine, illustrate the true character of what is called in the phrase of our citizens a *dead lounger*, to lay before them a second favour of my old friend and correspondent Narcissus. It is a journal of his Sunday's employment; and if I may judge from the complete system which it contains, must be the production of a profound adept. He desires my decision on his plan of life; but as I am not yet grown callous in the office of a censor, I consign him to the customary method of trial by a jury of his *Peers*.

'DEAR GREG,

'To dissipate *vapeur* what remedy d'ye think have chosen? To write journal, He! He! He! Want to know how I kill time; your opinion,

Yours, NARCISSUS.'

'*Sunday morning half past nine.* Yawned;—execrably sleepy.

'*Ten.* Read half your bill.—Head-ache

'*Half past ten.* Too cold for church.—Head-ache increased by bell.—N. B. To change my apartment that I may avoid that noise.

'*Eleven to twelve.* Took my chocolate.—Read half a page of Henrietta Harville.—Mem. Never to read Sentimental Novels after the 1st of May, or before 1st of November.

'*Twelve.* Terrace,—not a soul.—On my return saw cocked-hat with man under it.

'*Half past one.* Dinner.—No appetite.

'*Two.* Froth called.—Argument with Froth on long quarter'd shoes.—N. B. Froth dismally in the wrong.

'*Three to four.* Slept.—Dreamt of Butterflies.

'*Four.* Dress'd for castle prayers.

'*Half past four.* Lounged with Froth to castle prayers.—'Stonishing *Rou.*—Man in buzz-wig.—Fribble in thread-stockings.—Mem. Froth and self to drop his acquaintance.—Mem. Broke little boy's head.—Mem. Gave the dog a shilling.

'*Half past five.* Sipped my tea with Feather.—N. B. His silk-stockings.—N. B. The pattern seen last winter in town.—N. B. Not to tell him till he has worn them.

'*Six to half past.* Yawned and rou'd.

'*Half past to seven.* Rou'd and yawned.

'*Seven to eight.* Got vapours by looking out Microcosm.

'*Eight to nine.* Wrote my journal.—Buckled my shoe.

'*Nine to ten.* Intolerable vapours.—N. B. Vapours greatest bore in universe.

'*Ten to half past.* Lounged to Dapper's room.—Caught him reading Latin.—Smoked him.—Rou'd him.—Mem. Dapper in covered buttons.—*O imitatores, ser, ser, ser,* Lud, my memory! Do you remember the line in Virgil, Greg?

'*Half past ten to eleven.* Put on slippers and night-gown.—Picked teeth.

'*Eleven to twelve.* Went to bed.'

As an acknowledgment for the assistance Narcissus has afforded me, it is but reasonable that I should, as far as lies in my power, comply with the concluding request of his first billet. There is at present a vacant seat in the *lounging club*, occasioned by the expulsion of one of its members for explaining a passage in Horace. As far as mental qualifications have any weight in the scale, he is perfectly adapted to fill the chair. The honour of being a candidate, was, by the unanimous votes of the society, conferred on the Microcosmopolitan; and an evening accordingly fixed for my examination. Having received timely notice of their intentions, I prepared myself accordingly; and about half past four was ushered into an apartment, in which at a modest distance from a tea-equipage, were seated five respectable personages.

Now, gentle reader, before I proceed in the account of my reception, it is necessary that I premise, that it is not the mere mechanical qualities of an author, which have induced me to assume the character of a MICROCOSMOPOLITAN; but that as my predecessor with the short face, derived perhaps more dignity from that distinguishing feature which was to set him apart from the rest of mankind, than from any observation in his own work, so nature seems to have cut me out for a periodical writer, by endowing a long nose of mine with so strange a predilection for my chin, as on most occasions to form no very harmonious cadence in my organs of elocution.

'*Hinc mihi prima mali labes: Hence the first origin of all my ill.*' For when in return to the extravagant politeness of the whole room, I began to attempt something like a compliment, it had so visible an effect on the nerves of my audience, that forgetting the etiquette of receiving a stranger, they with one accord applied their hands to the offended seat of hearing. Nay, so violent were the emotions of one

of them, that he sprung across the table with the agility of a monkey, articulating, as well as the chattering of his teeth would allow him, '*I hope in Gad the animal is ta—a—ame.*' A universal titter was the immediate consequence of this ejaculation, when the president turning to me with a self-complacent apologizing simper, observed, that '*I must excuse Mr. Tinsel's oddities, as I should find him upon the whole a lounging creeter.*' Upon my bowing, a general silence ensued, till one of the company, in a voice which left me to doubt whether he was broad awake, yawned out, '*Tinsel, you have wetted my stocking.*' The whole room, except Tinsel (whose late alarm had forced him to have recourse to an adjacent lavender bottle), as if they had preconcerted a reply, reiterated *Twaddle.* So general an exclamation in a term which came nearer to *waddle* than any thing I had any idea of, I mistook for a personal application to me, till I saw the harmless creatures unanimously applying their white handkerchiefs to the injured stocking.

As soon as this important concern was adjusted, the president, addressing himself to me, told me, he had perused the title-page of my work, and was much pleased with the style; that the design, as explained there, was exquisite; that having, by an unfortunate accident, lost one of their number, they had unanimously agreed to make me the offer of his seat; and that, should I myself start any objections to the proposals, they wished to make my paper the medium for publishing this vacancy to the world; 'One thing,' added he, 'Mr. Griffin, this society and myself have been ineffably puzzled on, which is, whether your plan is grounded on personal satire or no?' Having made my acknowledgments to the company in general for the intended honour, I replied, that when it should be convenient to him to favour my first paper with a perusal, his objection would an-

swer itself: that at present I should only assure him, that on my side, nothing more than general allusions were intended, and on that of my fellow-citizens, '*Qui capit ille facit: Let the gall'd jade wince.*'

I had scarce pronounced these words when I became sensible of my carelessness by the significant looks of the company. The conversation immediately turned on stockings; when, as I was got out of my element, I sat for some time totally silent; and upon a proper opportunity took my leave, and retired to reflect on the scene I had quitted. On my coming home I found Narcissus's letters, and divesting myself of all the petulance of a disappointed candidate, sat down immediately to advertise him of this opportunity. Convinced, notwithstanding the plausible arguments of those who, under the immediate impulse of any favourite passion, cannot brook the idea of total listlessness, that an Apathist is as much a real, as a GRIFFIN is an imaginary being.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Availing myself of the permission of OCTAVIUS, I shall adapt his letter to the limits of my work, and shall take the same liberty with that of MUSIDORUS. My *visionary* friend, who signs himself AN ETONIAN, has expressed himself in such a strain of encomium, as I could not insert without incurring the imputation of vanity.

*

N° 4. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1786.

I demens et sævas curre per Alpes,
Ut Pueris placeas et declamatio fias.—JUVENAL.

Climb o'er the Alps, thou rash ambitious fool,
To please the boys and be a theme at school.—DRYDEN.

As the subject of the following discourse is the examination of a passion more peculiary prevalent in the minds of youth; and as I conceive it would be but an indifferent compliment to the talents of the younger part of my readers, to consider it necessary to apologize to them for the more serious nature of it; I shall, without detaining them any farther by unnecessary introduction, proceed to my subject, *the Love of Fame*. And this I consider not only as that exalted principle, which has in all ages produced patriots and heroes, but when in a depraved state, contributing more perhaps to the promotion of immorality, than our most violent passions and most craving appetites. For the observer will discover, that whenever this *primum mobile* of the mind is diverted from the pursuit of more laudable ambition, to the desire of false honour, and criminal adulation, its tendency is *only* diverted while its power remains unimpaired. This principle, capable of carrying us to the highest pitch of human ambition, or, on the other hand sinking us to the lowest ebb of depravity, is implanted in our natures; it is inherent in, and inseparable from, humanity; the reins are thrown into our hands, and the rest remains with ourselves.

It should seem then, that a reasonable being, conscious that he is possessed of such an internal principle, aware of the consequences immediately attend-

ing on a proper or improper use of it, and having the direction of it in his own power, could hardly err in the application: but unfortunately it happens, that the distribution of praise lies equally in the hands of all; and from hence it is, that the commonalty derive a power, for which they are far from being qualified by greater nicety of judgment or accuracy of observation. And these, too frequently judging more from outward appearance than an investigation of intrinsic merit, it will happen, that by far the greater share of glory attends upon what are called great actions; which, by their superior splendour, attract and dazzle the eyes of the multitude more than a sober train of benevolence, which passes over the mind with the smooth uniformity of a polished surface, not marked by any eminent feature, or distinguished by any leading characteristic. Hence, a wide barrier is fixed between actions glorious to the individual, and such as are useful to the community; and the effects produced by it are not so much to be wondered at as lamented. The life of a man beneficial to society, is most commonly passed in a continued series of benevolent actions, frequently in a circle extremely contracted; but this is not a life of glory, and though a useful uniformity may demand our praise, it lays no claim to our admiration. So unvaried indeed is the tenor of a life really useful, and not unusually charged with so little incident, that the muse, whose office it is to shed a perfunctory tear over the ashes of the deceased, has frequently been obliged, by the barrenness of the subject, to have recourse to topics of praise entirely fictitious; or relinquish a theme rendered so uninteresting by its uniformity. And if we except that of Pope on Mrs. Corbet, and the original of Crashaw, from which Pope seems to have transfused no inconsiderable part of his own performance, there does not perhaps remain in our language, an

elegant epitaph on any person undistinguished by military, civil, or literary exertions. I would wish however to except the following lines, which, in a parish in Yorkshire, cover the bones of an honest yeoman; whose merit seems to have been understood by the author, though he might have been prevented from recurring to feigned topics by the want of art evident in the construction of the lines,—I shall subject them to the perusal of my reader; they are as follow:

John Bell Brokenbow
Laies under this stane,
Four of my eene sonnes
Laied it on my weame,
I was master of my meat,
Master of my wife,
I lived on my own lands
Without mickle strife.

How much more glorious is this simple testimony to the undistinguished merits of a private man, than if it had announced the bones of a general, who, by the singular favour of fortune, had, with the loss of only twenty thousand individuals of the same country with himself, slaughtered two hundred thousand, guilty of being divided from it by a narrow sea, or a chain of mountains! The merit of the former character is evidently superior; yet our admiration had undoubtedly sided with the latter.

Not that this meritorious inaction is always undistinguished by observation and applause; the character of Atticus, is not perhaps less remarkable for its literary excellence, than the inactive acquiescence which he betrayed at a period when any degree of eminence must have been attended with consequences more or less repugnant to the interests of his country. How different is this patriotic conquest, over a desire of glory not to be obtained in a manner consistent with his country's welfare, from

the obstinacy of another character equally eminent about the same time, who would have

> Blush'd if Cato's house had stood,
> Secure, and flourished in a civil war.

It should seem doubtful whether the poet meant this sentiment for the effect of a natural impulse on the occasion which introduces it, or the result of an affectation eminent in the original character; and which could not have escaped the author, though so much its admirer: certain I am, that it could not proceed from the feelings of nature, even admitting the possibility of any connexion subsisting between an individual and his country, which did not in a stronger manner tie him to his family. I shall not at present arraign the policy which dictated a law to the Athenians, inflicting disgrace and ignominy on any one who in a public dissension might remain inactive; however, the observer may discover in this edict, the source of those disturbances which continually divided the state, and ended but in its ruin.

But to return to my subject, and perhaps it may not be entirely foreign from it, to observe, that admitting the desire of glory to have so great an influence as I contend it is possessed of; the higher ranks in life may be cleared of an imputation under which they have long laboured. I allude to an opinion extremely prevalent, that all national depravity and corruption, before it descends to the lower classes, originates among their superiors. The regard paid by the lower ranks to the example and authority of their superiors, has been cited, and with some degree of plausibility, to support this opinion; but is not this influence effectually and entirely counterbalanced, by the distribution of censure and applause which resides entirely in the hands of the commonalty? or can any one doubt the influence which the common people have with their superiors,

when he sees the forms of government change with the disposition of the people; and the affectation of ignorance and illiberality assumed by the higher orders at home, in their dress, manners, and conversation? We readily grant a propensity in the inferior orders to imitate the actions of their superiors; but is not imitation the height of flattery? and does not a readiness to receive and copy the depraved manners of a superior order, suppose a previous depravity in the people?

Perhaps the only true criterion of the utility or dangerous tendency of this passion, is the disposition of the times; for the same spirit which in a more corrupt period carries the enthusiast for it to the height of excess and extravagance, would, in an era of more simple manners, have produced the exact reverse;

> Lucullus, when frugality could charm,
> Had roasted turnips in his sabine farm.

And Cincinnatus, had he lived in a period less disposed to honour a virtuous poverty, might probably have changed the frugality of his simple meal, for the luxury of the *Apollo*.

The present path to glory, and consequently that which its votaries pursue, is faction; and even in this lesser world the observer may discover a demagogue in embryo, distinguished perhaps only for stronger powers of vociferation. But here, as upon all other occasions, the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN would wish to avoid misapprehension, and while he reprobates a turbulence of behaviour, does not wish his readers entirely to discard their judgment and free-will, and to degrade themselves to the rank of nonentities, or, according to a more accepted phrase, *ciphers*. The great increase of the above-mentioned species calls for attention; whether it proceeds from a prevailing idea that an individual,

like a numerical figure, is made of more consequence by the addition of a cipher, or from a fear in its promoters, of a discovery of their own weakness; as the cruel policy of Semiramis had its origin in an apprehension, that her sex might be discovered by an unprecedented want of beard. From whatever cause the present increase of this species arises, it is now grown to so formidable a height, as to require the attention of the public, and more particularly of the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

I would wish to present to the perusal of my readers, the following lines, not entirely foreign from some part of this essay; and at the same time admonish them, that the smile of Melpomene at the birth of a poet is useless, without that of his readers on his publication.

I.

Within the sounding quiver's hollow womb
 Repose the darts of praise and harmony;
Goddess, draw forth the chosen shaft; at whom
 Shall the swift arrows of the muses fly?
 By the great Almighty Mind,
 For man's highly-favoured race,
 Various blessings were design'd,
 Bounties of superior grace;
 Here the fat and fertile ground
 Waves the flood of harvest round,
 Or fervid wine's extatic juice
 Cluster-curved vines produce;
 A sullen land of lazy lakes
 Rhine slowly winding to the ocean makes,
 This rescued from the eager wave
Human art has dar'd to save,
While o'er each foggy pool and cheerless fen
Hums the busy buz of men.
A warlike nation bent on deathful deeds
 From daring actions safety seeks, and fame,
Rush thro' the ranks, where'er the battle bleeds,
 Or whirl their neighing coursers thro' the flame.

The Indian youth beneath the shade
More loves repose and peace,
And underneath his plantain laid
Sings indolence and ease.

II.

Thus far with unerring hand
All ruling Providence has plann'd,
Thus far impartial to divide
Not all to one, nor one to all denied.
But order, heav'n-descended queen,
Where'er you deign to go,
Alone you fix the bounds between
Our happiness and woe,
Nor wealth, nor peace, nor without thee
Heav'n's first best bounty, liberty,
Can bless our native land.
Then come, O nymph! and o'er this isle
Dispense thy soul-subduing smile,
And stretch thy lenient hand.

III.

Before time was, before the day
Shot thro' the skies his golden ray,
A sightless mass, a wasteful wild
Tumultuous gulf, was all this fair creation,
Till you the shapeless chaos reconcil'd,
Each part commanding to its proper station!
Then hills upheav'd their verdant head,
Above a purer sky was spread,
And ocean floated in his ample bed:
Then first creeping to the main
Rivers drew their tortuous train;
Then from her fertile womb the earth
Brought forth at one ample birth,
All that through the waste of sky
Borne on oary pinions fly,
Or thro' the deep's dark caverns roam,
And wallowing dash the sea to foam;
Tutor'd by your guiding sway,
The planets trace their pathless way,
The seasons in their order'd dance
In grateful interchange advance!
But when, O Goddess, wilt thou deign,
O'er favour'd man to stretch thy reign?
Then shall sedition's tempest cease,
The dashing storm be hush'd to peace,

The angry seas no longer roar,
But gently rolling kiss the shore,
While from the wave-worn rock the troubled waters pour.

IV.

When pois'd athwart the lurid air,
The sword of vengeance pours a sanguine ray,
Or comets from their stream of blazing hair
Shake the blue pestilence, and adverse sway
Of refluous battle, o'er some high vic'd land;
Thro' the sick air the power of poison flies,
By gentler breezes now no longer fann'd,
Sultry and still; the native breathes and dies.
Yet often free from selfish fear,
The son attends his father's bed,
Nor will disdain the social tear,
In pleasing painful mood to shed.—
When chilling pine and cheerless penury,
Stretch o'er some needy house their wither'd hand
Where modest want alone retires to die,
Yet social love has shed her influence bland,
To cheer the sullen gloom of poverty.
For 'tis decreed, that every social joy,
In its partition should be multiplied,
Still be the same, nor know the least alloy,
Tho' sympathy to thousands should divide
Our pleasures; but when urg'd by dire distress,
The grief by others felt is made the less.

V.

Not so the ills Sedition sows,
Midst sever'd friends and kindred foes;
When the horrid joy of all,
Imbitters ev'ry private fall.
Creeping from her secret source
Sedition holds her silent course,
With wat'ry weeds and sordid sedge
Skirting under unnoted edge,
Till scorning all her former bounds
She sweeps along the fertile grounds;
And as in sullen solemn state she glides,
Receives into her train the tributary tides;
Then rushing headlong from some craggy steep
She pours impetuous down and hurries to the deep.
Ah! luckless he, who o'er the tide
Shall hope his fragile bark to guide,

While secure his sail is spread,
The waves shall thunder o'er his head;
But if, long-tempest-tost, once more
His crazy bark regain the shore,
There shall he sit and long lament
His youthful vigour vainly spent;
And others warn, but warn, alas in vain,
In unambitious safety to remain.
Then happy he! who to the gale
Nor trusts too much the varying sail,
Nor rashly launching forth amain,
Attempts the terrors of the wat'ry plain;
But watchful, wary, when he sees
The ocean black beneath the breeze,
The cheerless sky with clouds o'erspread,
And darkness gath'ring round his head,
Trusts not too far, but hastes to seek
The shelter of some winding creek;
Thence sees the waves by whirlwinds tost,
And rash ambition's vessel lost;
Hears the mad pilot late deplore,
The shifting sail, the faithless oar,
And hears the shriek of death, the shriek that's heard no more.

D.

N° 5. MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1786.

Animo umbris rerum satisfacere.

BACON, de Augm. Scien.

To satisfy the mind with speculation.

Oppida quodam tempore florentissima, nunc prostrata et diruta ante oculos jacent.—SULP. ad Cic.

The ruins of cities, formerly flourishing and powerful, now lie scattered before my eyes.

As I am naturally of a thoughtful and speculative turn of mind, it is a favourite amusement with me, not only to traverse the well-known regions of Ancient History, but to launch into the wider ocean of conjecture, and explore in fancy, the

terra incognita of probability. In the course of these researches, the mind expatiates in a larger field, than the narrow and confined limits of known facts will otherwise permit it; in one case the inexhaustible stores of a fertile imagination supply abundant materials to our speculations; and we are left at full liberty to form air-drawn systems, and build impracticable theories, as extravagant as the wildest flights of fancy could ever suggest: and this has been the favourite, though perhaps useless, employment of many ingenious men, and is an innocent, at least, and copious source of amusement, which fills up the languid intervals of a leisure hour. The Atalantis of Plato, the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, and the Oceana of Dr. Harrington, fall (sit verbo venia) under the description of air-drawn and impracticable, though ingenious systems. In the other case, we are confined to the limits of authenticated history, and fancy makes a vain effort to burst those chains, which knowledge and truth have imposed upon her; we can only reflect, and draw useful inferences from the various events which crowd the historic page; from the various calamities which the treachery, the ambition, and the crimes, of one small part of mankind, have undeservedly drawn down on the infinitely larger portion that remains. This is in part the opinion of one of the most learned and ingenious men of our age; what he applies to the difference between poetry and history, I shall apply to that between history and conjecture.

"Nimium angustis finibus continetur historia, nimium severas habet operis sui leges. Res gestas tradit, eventorum vestigiis insistit: quod contigit, non quod contigisse *potuit* aut oportuit narrandum, nec quo documenti opportunitas, aut *probabilitatis* ratio vocat, sed quo facti necessitas cogit, eundum. Historia res et personas certas et constitutas tractat,

* Lowth de Poesi Hebræorum.

infinitas et universales poesis: illa præscriptum iter certâ conficit via, hæc liberis naturæ spatiis fruitur.'

'History is confined within too narrow limits, is bound by too severe restrictions; she records transactions, and adheres to the traces of past deeds; she relates what has, not what *might* or ought to have happened; she is to follow, not where an opportunity of drawing a moral inference, or venturing a *probable conjecture*, calls her, but where the necessity of relating a fact compels her. History treats of particular and determined characters; poetry comprehends those of every description: the one finishes her allotted journey by a certain road; the other expatiates in the ample field of unbounded nature.'

But even in the historic field is an extensive range for the most comprehensive mind; and the sagacious reflections of learning on so copious a subject, have filled the volumes of knowledge and philosophy. But to exercise the speculative powers of the mind, is to me at least a more pleasing employment, especially, if forming our judgment from the past events of antiquity, and asserting, what is surely no extravagant assertion, that similar causes will produce similar effects, we thence deduce the most probable consequences: and thus tempering the licentiousness of conjecture with the caution of experience, from that hypothesis, which according to the general course of human events, and with due allowance for those unexpected incidents which often give the decisive bias to the most important transactions, is least liable to objection, and the most probable consequence of a given proposition.

Indulging this favourite propensity, I grounded the following speculation on the extract from Sulpicius's consolatory letter to Cicero, which is prefixed to this essay.

When I reflect on the fate of the different em-

pires, which have at various periods enslaved mankind; when I consider those stupendous frames of political mechanism, which have so long engaged the attention and claimed the admiration of the philosopher and speculatist, but whose remaining vestiges are to be traced only in the records of history, or discoverable in the magnificent ruins of desolated countries; I cannot but suppose, that a similar fate awaits the now-flourishing nations of the civilized world: an event, that will most probably take place in some distant period, when the sun of science will be again obscured in the shades of ignorance, and once more be immersed in primitive barbarism.

The empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, once fondly flattered themselves, that their splendour would be as lasting as the frame of the universe; and the Roman had a still stronger claim to immortality; as, by comprehending the whole then known globe within its boundaries, it seemed to be equally secure from the impetuous violence of an open enemy, or the more certain, though slower operations of the great destroyer, time.

When those 'Subverters of Nations,' and 'Scourges in the hand of God,' as they were emphatically styled by the contemporary historians, who so sensibly felt the calamities they described, an Atila or an Alaric had overturned this mighty fabric; its disjointed members were divided into numberless distinct bodies; from one or the other of which many of the present European powers derive their origin. The Lombards, Goths, and Huns, are instances too well known to need farther illustration; one alone is sufficient; the present emperors of Germany are, or pretend to be, seated on the throne of Augustus, the legal successors of the Roman Cæsars.

The Eastern or Constantinopolitan empire still subsisted, the feeble remnant of that majesty which once had swayed the sceptre of the world. But the

rising power of the Ottoman arms, under the auspices of the second Mahomet, totally obscured this only remaining ray of the declining splendour of the Roman system. The setting glory of the Saracen and Arabian caliphs entirely vanished before the Turkish crescent; and the blood-stained laurels of Genghis and Kouli Khan, polluted by that destructive ferocity which marked the rapidity of their conquest, have long since faded and withered from their brows. To close this long list of the vanity of human grandeur, the only remaining branch of the illustrious house of Tamerlane, is at this moment a precarious dependant on the capricious will of a few private merchants.

The destruction of most of these immense powers originated from a quarter, whence it was not dreaded till it was felt; from the attacks of barbarous and uncivilized nations. The Roman indeed seems to have foreseen the tempest which was to overwhelm him, and, with all the precaution which human prudence could suggest, to have guarded against it by the strong barriers and veteran legions which garrisoned the towns on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. The event proved the wisdom of that foresight which dictated the measure; for the moment the destructive policy of Constantine removed these barriers, the barbarians rushed in at the opening, and entirely destroyed the tottering fabric.

Perhaps in future ages, by analogy of reasoning, some savage tribes, now roaming over the vast deserts of Asia or America, may enrich themselves with the fertile possessions of their more polished neighbours; and, like second Goths, raise the rude structure of ignorance and barbarism on the ruins of philosophy, science, and civilization. When the wounds of national dissension are healed, and that liberty, for which it has struggled against the authority of the parent country, is established on the

firm basis of acknowledged constitutional rights, the * phenomenon of an independent Transatlantic state may give the fatal blow to European politics, and America perhaps arise the destined seat of a future empire.

When we compare Tacitus's Treatise *on the Manners of the Germans*, with Lafitau's Account of the *American Tribes*, we cannot but be struck with the similarity of the subject; and we may remark, that at the period when Tacitus wrote, when the Roman empire was in its meridian glory, Germany, Gaul, and Britain, now the seats of science and literature, were nearly in the same state of unpolished nature, which is the present characteristic of the American tribes, whom Lafitau describes. Europe has now nearly arrived at the highest pitch of refinement and civilization. It has been observed, that the human mind will never remain inactive, but will always have either a progressive or retrograde motion; will either gain the heights of excellence, or sink into the abyss of depravity; and there is a degree in both, beyond which it can neither rise or fall, but like the flood, when it has gained the highest shore, will naturally retreat, and when at the lowest ebb, will gradually recover its former height. The truth of this observation has been already too severely exemplified to be doubted; may not a similar corruption of manners produce a similar decline in the arts and

* To shew that speculation is in some instances at least well grounded, I shall lay before my readers a passage from Hume, which proves, that so long ago as the year 1606, the speculatists of that age foretold, what a recent event has justified, 'Speculative reasoners, during that age, raised many objections to planting remote colonies; and foretold, that after draining their mother country of its inhabitants, they would soon shake off her yoke, and erect *an independent government* in America.' Vol. 6, page 127. By referring to the original text, the reader will find, that the historian was no friend to this doctrine; but the event has justified the prediction.

military prowess? and is it an extravagant conjecture, that in process of time the same fate may overwhelm us, which destroyed the empires before us?

But it is time to restrain the lawless efforts of imagination, and to recall the attention of the mind from a speculation, in whose windings and labyrinths our directing clue may be lost; where the powers of delusion may fascinate the mental eye, and involve us in inextricable darkness and error.

If the reader will indulge me a few moments longer in the self-created phantoms of my brain, I shall give way to the melancholy-pleasing ideas of my fancy; and pursuing my speculation, suppose what may be the probable state of Great Britain at that period, when we shall no longer exist as an independent nation; when the chains of slavery shall have gall'd our limbs, and liberty be only that '*magni nominis umbra*,' that '*shadow of a mighty name*,' which

> wrinkled Beldams
> Teach to their grand-children as somewhat rare,
> That anciently appeared, but when, extends
> Beyond their Chronicle.—GRAY'S AGRIPPINA.

Perhaps the inquisitive genius of curiosity may then visit this island, from the same motives which now attract the traveller to the venerable ruins of Athens or Rome: the antiquary may collect a series of British, with as much avidity, as he now arranges his Roman or Grecian coins; a true George the Third may engage the attention of a Virtú as much as a genuine Augustus or Trajan; the older edition of Shakspeare, Milton, or Pope, may authorize a different reading, as much as an older manuscript of Homer, Cicero, or Virgil; the monumental records of Westminster-abbey may be considered as the authentic testimonies of illustrious actions, as much as the inscriptions collected by Montfaucon, or the Arundelian marbles at Oxford. The ruins of a university may attract the admiration of the traveller;

the plans and designs of the different buildings may be preserved with that reverence which we now pay to the ruins of Palmyra or Balbec. May not the same spirit which inspired Cicero when he beheld the porticos of Athens, seize some future philosopher? the one has paid, the other will pay the homage of admiration due to departed genius. As the one beheld with reverential awe those seats which had been dignified by the presence of a Socrates, a Plato, and an Aristotle; the other may behold with pious gratitude those, where the immortal Milton planned his Paradise Lost; a Newton pierced through the clouds of philosophical error; and the comprehensive mind of a Bacon burst the fetters of scholastic pedantry, and boldly asserted the incontrovertible laws of nature, truth, and learning. To contract myself to a narrower sphere, may not reflection heave a sigh, when she beholds the vestiges of this nursery of genius, where so many patriots, philosophers, and poets, each in their respective lines the boast of their native soil, first caught that generous enthusiasm for solid glory, which proved the source of such renown to themselves and their country; by which they reflected a mutual light on each other; and which enabled the one to immortalize by his pen, those exploits which the more active abilities of the other had imboldened him to perform.—A.

I beg leave to lay before my readers the following Poem, produced by reflections of a similar kind.

THE SLAVERY OF GREECE.

Unrivall'd Greece! thou ever honour'd name,
Thou nurse of heroes dear to deathless fame!
Tho' now to worth, to honour all unknown,
Thy lustre faded, and thy glories flown,
Yet still shall memory with reverted eye
Trace thy past worth, and view thee with a sigh.

Thee freedom cherish'd once with fostering hand,
And breath'd undaunted valour through the land,
Here the stern spirit of the Spartan soil,
The child of poverty, inur'd to toil.
Here lov'd by Pallas and the sacred nine,
Once did fair Athens' tow'ry glories shine.
To bend the bow, or the bright falchion wield,
To lift the bulwark of the brazen shield,
To toss the terror of the whizzing spear,
The conqu'ring standard's glitt'ring glories rear,
And join the mad'ning battle's loud career,
How skill'd the Greeks; confess what Persians slain
Were strew'd on Marathon's ensanguin'd plain;
When heaps on heaps the routed squadrons fell,
And with their gaudy myriads peopled hell.
What millions bold Leonidas withstood,
And sealed the Grecian freedom with his blood;
Witness Thermopylæ! how fierce he trod,
How spoke a Hero, and how mov'd a God!
The rush of nations could alone sustain,
While half the ravaged globe was arm'd in vain.
Let Leuctra say, let Mantinea tell,
How great Epaminondas fought and fell!
Nor war's vast art alone adorn'd thy fame,
'But mild philosophy endear'd thy name.'
Who knows not, sees not with admiring eye,
How Plato thought, how Socrates could die?
To bend the arch, to bid the column rise,
And the tall pile aspiring pierce the skies,
The awful fane magnificently great,
With pictur'd pomp to grace, and sculptur'd state,
This science taught; on Greece each science shone,
Here the bold statue started from the stone;
Here warm with life the swelling canvas glow'd;
Here big with thought the poet's raptures flow'd:
Here Homer's lip was touch'd with sacred fire,
And wanton Sappho tun'd her amorous lyre;
Here bold Tyrtæus rous'd the enervate throng,
Awak'd to glory by th' aspiring song;
Here, Pindar soar'd a nobler, loftier way,
And brave Alcæus scorn'd a tyrant's sway;
Here gorgeous Tragedy with great control
Touch'd every feeling of th' impassion'd soul;
While in soft measure tripping to the song
Her comic sister lightly danc'd along.—
This was thy state! but oh! how chang'd thy fame,
And all thy glories fading into shame.

What! that thy bold, thy freedom-breathing land
Should crouch beneath a tyrant's stern command!
That servitude should bind in galling chain,
Whom Asia's millions once oppos'd in vain;
Who could have thought? who sees without a groan,
Thy cities mouldering, and thy walls o'erthrown.
That where once tower'd the stately solemn fane,
Now moss-grown ruins strew the ravag'd plain,
And unobserv'd but by the traveller's eye,
Proud, vaulted domes in fretted fragments lie,
And the fall'n column on the dusty ground,
Pale ivy throws its sluggish arms around.
Thy sons (sad change!) in abject bondage sigh,
Unpitied toil, and unlamented die.
Groan at the labours of the galling oar,
Or the dark caverns of the mine explore.
The glitt'ring tyranny of Othman's sons,
The pomp of horror which surrounds their thrones,
Has awed their servile spirits into fear,
Spurn'd by the foot they tremble and revere.
The day of labour, night's sad, sleepless hour,
Th' inflictive scourge of arbitrary power,
The bloody terror of the pointed steel,
The murderous stake, the agonizing wheel,
And (dreadful choice) the bowstring, or the bowl,
Damps their faint vigour, and unmans the soul.
Disastrous fate! still tears will fill the eye,
Still recollection prompt the mournful sigh;
When to the mind recurs thy former fame,
And all the horrors of thy present shame.
So some tall rock, whose bare, broad bosom high,
Tow'rs from the earth, and braves th' inclement sky;
On whose vast top the black'ning deluge pours,
At whose wide base the thund'ring ocean roars;
In conscious pride its huge gigantic form
Surveys imperious and defies the storm.
Till worn by age, and mould'ring to decay,
Th' insidious waters wash its base away,
It falls, and falling cleaves the trembling ground,
And spreads a tempest of destruction round.

B.

*

N° 6. MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1786.

Turba clientum.
A crowd of correspondents.

WHATEVER satisfaction the reader may receive from the perusal of the following letters, he is to attribute it to the favours of my unknown correspondents; with whom I have taken the liberty allowed me of omitting some passages, which could not be inserted, without incurring, on my side, the imputation of vanity. As I have been forced to adapt their productions to the limits of my work, a few paragraphs which had not an immediate reference to the subject, have been also suppressed, but not a line added.

'To Mr. GREGORY GRIFFIN.

Nunc adhibe puro
Pectore verba, puer, nunc te melioribus offer.—HOR.

——————————— Now pliantly inure
The mind to virtue, while your heart is pure;
Now suck in wisdom.—FRANCIS.

'SIR

'Fully sensible that the noblest pursuit, which can possibly engage the attention of a human being, next to the practice of virtue itself, is the study of diminishing the numberless mad votaries, who daily flock to the alluring banners of vice; and by pointing out the latent quicksands where so many heedless thousands have perished, exhort others to avoid a similar destruction, by a sudden reform of their pernicious courses, and by eagerly embracing the proffered offers of repentance; a mind eager to add

its humble mite to this glorious undertaking, dictates the present epistle; and hopes, that the sincerity of its intention will plead for the favour and patronage of the *Microcosmopolitan*.

'Sages versed in the most abstruse sciences of philosophy, those who through all ages have made the most splendid appearance in the paths of literature, and the estimation of the learned world, have in many instances generously given up the labours of their life, to the task of implanting the admonitions of morality in the breast of their contemporaries.

'In the vegetable and animal creation, early culture applied to the tender plant, or management to the beast, as soon as either is capable of receiving good or bad impressions, will remain, "until the one is hewn down and cast into the fire," and the other perishes by the natural effects of age. The gardener's hand can cause the delicate honeysuckle to entwine the majestic oak; the inhabitant of Ispahan tames the gigantic elephant; the savage African traverses his native deserts on the back of the stately dromedary; and the farthest citizen of Kamschatka passes over tracts of ice and snow seemingly impervious, by the wonderful sagacity which he has instilled into dogs. That the human mind is much more wonderfully formed for a similar cultivation, need not be observed.

'Youth is the season, when every example, every lesson which virtue or vice can inculcate are the most certain to stamp lasting impressions on the mind. Passions imbibed at an early period, seldom fail to give a decisive bias to our future life; and conquering almost every opposition, to govern the man with an arbitrary sway. Convinced of this, how sincerely grateful should we be for every endeavour which tends to the important point of our future felicity; how cautiously should we guard every trifling action

against the baleful influence of vice, or the insidious blandishments of temptation.

'Few breasts are so pure, or possess such an absolute self-dominion, but that some one passion will by degrees, and by frequent indulgence, gain an ascendency over the others; and work them into a state of such abject slavery, as to render them entirely subservient to its own authority. Would we but impartially examine our own minds, and determine to discover it in its rise, very little restraint might perhaps utterly eradicate it in its infancy; or reduce it at least to such subjection, as to prevent it from becoming our future bane.

'But descending from subjects more important, give me leave to remark, with how much greater pleasure to themselves, with how much less censure from the world at large, or particularly from their more immediate acquaintance, would the lives of individuals be passed, if each (although I fancy it is a thing utterly impracticable entirely to attain) would endeavour, as far as is in his power, to extirpate from his conversation, and the general tenor of his more private actions, certain ridiculous peculiarities which eminently mark his character.

'If, for instance, I interrogate a friend of mine whether Miss ——— attended such a ball, and how she danced? he instantly replies, "*Indeed, Sir, she did attend; and danced, oh! she danced like the very devil!*" How, I again ask, was she dressed? *Oh! she was dressed with peculiar elegance, outshone the other beauties in the room, and looked as enchanting as the devil.*" Whether his infernal majesty really possesses all the attributes my friend is pleased to ascribe to him or not, is not much to our purpose; however, to the generality of his auditors, I should rather suppose, that such an addition to most of the sentences he uttered, would appear in a disadvantageous, rather than an ornamental light.

'The same person (as if he was desirous early to accustom his body to the use of a coffin) would, I believe rather forego his night's rest, than sleep in a bed two inches broader than is absolutely necessary. Many other peculiarities time will not permit me to notice. I frequently threaten him with the certainty of his expiring an old bachelor; but I am convinced that a hint from Mr. Griffin, will be far more efficacious towards the recovery of my friend, than the terrors of perpetual celibacy. I am, Sir, &c.

MUSIDORUS.'

Nov. 18, 1786.

'DEAR GREG,

'You were in a plaguy hurry to fill up the vacant seat in the lounging club. I should have disputed the pretensions of Narcissus myself, and I am confident there is not a single member of our *non-chalance* society, but better deserved the distinction; —hear, and judge for yourself.—You must know we are a firm CON, who regularly spend our Saturdays in recapitulating the business of the week, and the lucky rogue who proves himself to have done the *least* good, who has taken the most effectual pains to evade every purpose of his education, to affect indisposition with the greatest art, and loll away his hours with the most perfect indolence, is chosen PRESIDENT for the ensuing week; with many privileges that I may possibly acquaint you with hereafter.—The immediate peals of applause that follow the promotion, would do your heart good, and has made me take more pains to arrive at the honour, than the closest attention to my education would have cost me. I proved to the satisfaction of the whole society last Saturday, that all the traces of my abilities, discoverable for the last week, were those before them on the chimney-piece, from a hot poker. What shouts of applause! and I was actually hustled

one foot into the chair, when an unlucky member discovered, that I had taken too much pains in burning the initial letters of my name, and that they remained an *indelible* proof against me. He sprang into the chair with the unanimous voice of the whole club, for it was proved in his favour, that in the whole course of the week he had done nothing, except indeed throwing a cravat into the fire, because it had been ill washed, and was not brought the moment he ordered it. There was exertion in this, added to some abuse he had given the servant, and I voted to dispossess him; but it appeared, that his tutor, with a mildness peculiar to himself, had taken great pains that very morning to convince him of his errors; that his idleness and extravagance deeply distressed an indulgent father; was ruin to the hopes of his whole family; and a melancholy waste of abilities that he might some time lament, but never have the power to retrieve. To this, and much more, dictated by virtue and friendship, he turned an ear of *non-chalance*, vowed it was an excessive *bore*, flew to the club, and sent for a new pair of buckles three inches larger than the last. I roared my consent to the promotion of such a jolly dog, proof against the mildest dictates of reason; the strongest ties of gratitude and affection; and the necessity of that economy, which his situation in life particularly demanded from him. I now stand a candidate for the next week, and in the name of all the powers of indolence, my dear Greg, don't bring lounging into contempt, till I have shared the honours of the society.

'You have absolutely destroyed us by your raillery against swearing. It was a happy relief for dulness, and supplied the want of information upon every subject. I swore roundly on the cleverness of your first number, and had actually practised a new and choice collection of execrations to come out with the second; and when our PRESIDENT read it (a labour by the

by, that but for his unrivalled claims would have cost him his place), I sat lounging with one leg carelessly thrown over my knee, patting the other, with my new volley, as I may say, ready at my fingers ends; but when he had finished, I could not express a single syllable, and have not swore an oath since, without a sheepish kind of consciousness, that destroys as it were the plumpness of utterance; and I verily believe, I shall be reduced to the wretched alternative of feigning myself totally dumb, or be at the pains of acquiring some knowledge, to qualify myself for conversation.

'I was recovering the other day, and beginning to rap out an execration with a tolerable air of indifference, when a tall fellow tapped me on the shoulder, halloo'd *Microcosm* in my ear, and making me spring at least three feet from the ground, whirled my abortive oath to some attendant spirit, who never let it drop in this world, and I hope will never record it in the next. But, for pity's sake, my dear Greg, don't be too virtuous; leave us some vices to revel in; for at the unmerciful rate you go on, lopping off a vice or a folly every week, we shall be the dullest seminary in Christendom; we shall have nothing to do but to study; and I am sadly afraid it will become fashionable to be attentive, diligent, and healthy; —for why attempt, by feigned sickness, to escape from scholastic trammels, if it is no longer *knowing* to *swear*, *lounge*, or in any shape to play the fool?

Yours, OCTAVIUS.'

Nov. 20, 1786.

'To the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

'DEAR GRIF, Eton, Monday, Nov. 27, 1786.

'Being myself a sincere admirer of your plan, and being willing, as far as lay in my power, to contribute to its success, I have made it my business

to collect the various observations of your fellow-citizens on their new censor. I shall not detain you with the many different conjectures concerning the meaning, and true pronunciation of your title; suffice it, there was not a word beginning with the same letter, or any ways resembling it, either in similarity of sound, or an equal number of syllables, to which it was not supposed to have some reference. Nor was the design itself, and the concealment which the author affected, less the subject of investigation. Morality, ribaldry, politics, poetry, panegyric, and personal invective, were by turns hinted at as the materials of your lucubrations. With regard to yourself, were I to mention to you all who were supposed to lie hid under the name of *Gregory Griffin*, I should seem to impose on your credulity. Neither the vacant levity of the *idler*, the solid stupidity of the *blockhead*, nor the harmless insignificance which distinguishes the lifeless character of the *cipher*, secured them from the imputation of GREGORIANISM. Every body's motions were watched with a ridiculous attention; the hapless being who was discovered reading a manuscript of any kind, gave rise to an immediate suspicion; and an unusual distention of the risible muscles at the sight of the Microcosm, effectually branded him with the name of *Authorling*. Nay, even the innocent letters which composed the name (upon the idea of *Cabal and Smectymnuus*), were adjudged to the rack; and like tortured criminals, made to confess more than they knew. Nor were there wanting some, who by shrewd shrugs and sly innuendos, sagaciously intimated, that though they said nothing, *they knew what they knew*. The beak and claws of the imaginary being, whose name the author had assumed, were not supposed to be given him for nothing. And many, the summit of whose ambition before had been to pass through life with comfortable serenity,

now began to look upon themselves as objects sufficiently dignified for satirical notice, or hoped at least, to be lashed into importance as the shadows of more distinguished offenders, without personally feeling the smart; as the *pillorying* of his master reflects honour on the printer's devil, while he himself remains

———Sanus utrisque
Auribus.
His ears uncropped.

I am, Sir, your sincere well-wisher,
OBSERVATOR.'

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

It is not consistent with my plan to insert the letter of TELEMACHUS; as to its publication in the London papers, he is at liberty to use his pleasure. —I had unfortunately mislaid the letter of ABSALOM THOUGHTFUL, which prevented my inserting it as I intended. Whenever the hints he furnished me with shall appear, he may depend upon due acknowledgment.—My Female Correspondent, who signs herself DOROTHY TEARSHEET, as I am willing to believe her all that is fair and modest, *was not*, I should suppose, aware of the tendency of her signature.—CÆMETERIUS shall be attended to.

And now, having thus far prosecuted my undertaking, with a spirit of industry, inspired by an encouragement and applause far above my deserts, or my expectations, I must, for a while, retire from the observation of the public. To my fellow-citizens I need make no apology for the temporary discontinuance of my labours; as the same event which causes that cessation, disperses them into different and distant parts of the kingdom, whither the works of the *Microcosmopolitan* could not be conveyed to them without a trouble and expense of which they

are unworthy. Those of my readers who do not come under that denomination, will not, I hope, be offended at the pause I am thus necessitated to make, but will receive, with equal kindness and indulgence, my weekly lucubrations, from MONDAY, the 15th of *January* next, on which day they will be recommenced, to be continued without farther interruption.

P. S. During this interval, any letter (post paid) will reach the author with the usual direction.

N° 7. MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1787.

——————————Jocis,
Ludoque dictus non sat idoneus.—HORACE.

——————————Unfit
For sprightly jokes, or sportive wit.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR,

'To discharge with faithfulness the duties of the important office which you have undertaken, you ought in my opinion to omit nothing which might be any ways conducive to the advantage or improvement of your fellow-citizens; to the advancement of their welfare, or the support of their dignity. Of this number I have the honour to be one; and by grounding a few remarks on the subject which I now offer to your consideration, you will confer a benefit not on me only, but on many others of the great as well as little world, who may labour under the same calamity.

'You must know, Mr. Griffin, that it is my hard hap to receive an annual invitation from an old gen-

tleman, a distant relation of mine, to spend every Christmas at his hall, in a northern county. This compliment I am never at liberty to refuse; as his estate being very large, and himself too far advanced in life to give any apprehensions of matrimony, my family have built great hopes and expectations on his partiality for me. That you may understand the nature of my misfortunes, it is necessary to inform you, that he is one of that race of men, called country 'squires; who having been deprived of the advantages of a liberal education, by the foolish fondness of his parents, which occasioned them always to keep him in their sight, professes to hold *book-learning* in the greatest contempt. Hence he takes no small pleasure to overthrow the arguments advanced by the parson of the parish in its favour, by alleging its inefficacy to enrich a man, which he exemplifies in the poverty of his opponent; and adds with a triumphant sneer, that "*if his learning would get him a good living, he would say something.*" In short, Sir, this talent of *joking*, is the grievance of which I complain; for when the old gentleman is once in the humour, he is apt to be unmercifully waggish; an event which never fails to take place on the day of my arrival.

'I would you could see us, Mr. Griffin, as we sit round the table in the great hall; you might then possibly form some idea of my miserable situation. —It is necessary for your proper information, to premise, that the company on that day always consists of the 'squire, with his feet in flannel (the gout, like myself, usually paying its annual visit about this time),—the parson of the parish, who is always invited to welcome me,—and two nieces of the 'squire, who have passed some years with him, not much to the advantage of their education, and are dizened out on this occasion in all their finery.

'Having for several years been accustomed to

sustain a very regular fire of wit all the first evening of my arrival, and knowing from experience the order in which the jokes succeed each other, I can now nearly bear the battle without flinching. The first attack is made, as the parson terms it, *à posteriori*, by desiring a cushion to be brought for me to sit down upon; one of his nieces, with a suitable grin on her countenance, inquires the reason, as in duty bound, for which she is referred to me; and on my protesting my ignorance of it, the old gentleman's right eye instantly assumes an arch leer at the company, while with a composed gravity he inquires of me, "*whether birch grows pretty plentifully about Eton?*" This question is immediately followed by an ungovernable he! he! from the young ladies, and a sly "*I warrant ye!*" from the parson. The 'squire having for a time retained his gravity, at length, as if quite overcome by the force of his own wit, gives himself up to a loud and tumultuous vociferation. This grand volley of wit, with the scattered small shot that follow, concerning, *great home consumption of the article; great demand for pickle, diachylon,* &c. &c. generally fills up the space before dinner. That joke indeed about the similitude of *our* arms to the American, namely, *thirteen stripes*, did, the first time of hearing, occasion me to laugh heartily; the second recital provoked a smile; but I am now grown so callous by dint of frequent repetition, that I can hear it without moving a muscle of my countenance.

'At dinner my troubles begin afresh. The very dishes are calculated to furnish out a set of witticisms. The leg of mutton he supposes he may help me to, as he dares to say that I never heard of any such thing at Eton: the boiled fowls he conjectures to be too common food for me; and he declares himself not without apprehensions, that I may find fault with the poorness of his wines, being accustomed to drink none but the choicest elsewhere.

During the interval between the first and second course, it is easy to perceive that there has been some little plan concerted for my surprise or mortification. Every nose in company has a forefinger applied to it to enforce secrecy; and every eye is fixed on my countenance, to enjoy the transports which I am expected to discover at the entrance of a *plum-pudding* of immoderate size; half of which is immediately transferred to my plate, accompanied with sundry wise cautions, to lose no time and not be too modest. While in my own defence, I am endeavouring to make away with some little portion of it, the 'squire declare she thought he should surprise me; and on my disclaiming any such surprise, an appeal is made to the rest of the company, by whom it is unanimously resolved, that, when the pudding made its appearance, I betrayed the strongest symptoms of rapturous admiration.

'Finding it in vain to contend, I now resign myself to my fate;—nor long the time, before the old gentleman's countenance begins to undergo various revolutions, which seem to prognosticate some stroke of uncommon pleasantry:—and at the appearance of a dish of pippins, I prepare myself with Christian patience for the *good story*, which I am assured I never heard before,—namely, "*a full and true account of his being caught in Farmer Dobson's orchard, stealing, as it might be, just such apples as these, when he was just about my age.*"—It is now, Mr. Griffin, just fourteen years since I first heard this story; and every one of the fourteen times of telling it, he has, with wonderful facility, adapted it to my comprehension, by contriving to be "*just about my age*" when the adventure happened. The tale being told, it is customary for one of his nieces to ask me in a whisper, "if I don't think him *monstrous funny?*" on my assenting to it, I am informed, that "*he has some such comical stories I can't think,*" and that "she

will get him to tell me *how old Dixon tricked the Londoner.*" Nor is it without an infinite number of protestations, that I am able to make her sensible of my perfect acquaintance with all the circumstances of that notable history, and to dissuade her from a courtesy so superfluous.

'After some short respite, I perceive the old gentleman begins to grow waggish again, and am soon desired to stand up and measure heights with the young ladies.—As I am some years older than they, I have been regularly found some inches taller every time of measurement; and this circumstance has as regularly produced one wink of the 'squire's right eye, and two several repetitions of the old proverb, that "*Ill weeds grow apace.*"

'Next follows my examination by the parson, touching the proficiency which I have made; prefaced indeed by the 'squire's declaring himself willing to wager any thing on *my knowing all about it as well as the best of them;* during the ceremony he usually falls asleep, and on waking takes the opportunity to have a fling at the parson, by asking significantly "whether I am too *hard for him?*"

'But in short, Mr. Griffin, I lament my inability to give you a perfect idea of this character, which however I am persuaded is not very uncommon. There are, no doubt, many, who in the same manner, aim at the reputation of *Wits* without any advantages either of natural abilities, or acquired understanding. On such as these I could wish you to bestow some advice, for the correction of their ignorant pretensions, and the amendment of their erroneous opinions. These are the people most apt to indulge their satirical humour at the expense of your fellow-citizens, whose honour and credit it is your duty to defend against every calumniatory imputation. Tell then these good people, how widely mistaken they

are in supposing, that the mind of youth, like the vegetation of the walnut-tree, is quickened by blows in its advances to maturity. Tell them, that the waters of Helicon do not flow with *brine*; nor are the laurel and the birch so intimately interwoven in the chaplets of the muses, as they are willing to believe. Tell them also, that an increase of *knowledge* does not necessarily bring with it a proportionable increase of *appetite;* and that the being able to read a Roman author with facility, does not justify the supposition of an immoderate desire for *toast and butter*, and an insatiable craving for *plum-pudding*. Remind them, that these, and all similar jokes which they are pleased to make use of on these occasions, have been made the same use of at least fifty times before. Advise them to reflect how often they themselves, on the same subjects, at stated opportunities, have reiterated those regular bon-mots and trite conceits; how often given vent to the same strain of annual waggery, to the same sallies of periodical facetiousness. And let them know, that as they have but little to boast of on the score of novelty, they have as little on that of humour. If on the repetition of their witticisms, a grin takes possession of the countenance of their auditors, warn them that they mistake not the sneer of ridicule for the smile of approbation, and hint to them, that though, by the respect and diffidence of those at whose expense it pleases them to be merry, they may be secured from being rendered openly ridiculous; they may still be liable and likely to become secretly contemptible.

I am, Sir, yours, &c. &c.'

The grievance of which my correspondent complains, is well worthy of being attended to, nor had it indeed escaped my notice; but he has placed his subject in so proper a light, that to dilate on it farther would be totally superfluous.—I shall therefore

only venture to throw together some observations of a more general kind.

It is with men of their wit, as with women of their beauty:—Tell a woman she is fair, and she will not be offended that you tell her she is cruel. Tell a man that he is a wit, and if you lay to his charge ill-nature or blasphemy, he will take it as a compliment rather than a reproach. Thus too, there is no woman but lays some claim to beauty; and no man that will give up his pretensions to wit. In cases of this kind therefore, where so much depends upon opinion, and where every man thinks himself qualified to be his own judge, there is nothing to a reader so useless as illustration; and nothing to an author so dangerous as definition. Any attempt therefore to decide what true WIT is, must be ineffectual; as not one in a hundred would be content to abide by the decision: it is impossible to rank all mankind under the name of wits, and there is scarce one in a hundred who does not think that he merits the appellation.

Hence it is that every one, how little qualified soever, is fond of making a display of his fancied abilities; and generally at the expense of some one to whom he supposes himself infinitely superior. And from this supposition many mistakes arise to those who commence wags, with a very small share of wit, and a still smaller of judgment; whose imaginations are by nature unprolific, and whose minds are uncultivated by education. These persons, while they are ringing their rounds on a few dull jests, are apt to mistake the rude and noisy merriment of illiterate jocularity, for genuine humour. They often unhappily conceive, that those laugh *with* them, who laugh *at* them. The sarcasms which every one disdains to answer, they vainly flatter themselves are unanswerable; forgetting, no doubt, that their *good things* are unworthy the notice of a

retort, and below the condescension of criticism. They know not perhaps that the Ass, whom the fable represents assuming the playfulness of the lap-dog, is a perfect picture of jocular stupidity; and that in like manner, that awkward absurdity of waggishness, which they expect should delight, cannot but disgust; and instead of laying claim to admiration, must ensure contempt.

But, alas! I am aware that mine will prove a successless undertaking; and that though knight-errand like I sally forth to engage with the monsters of witticism and waggery, all my prowess will be inadequate to the achievement of the enterprise. The world will continue as facetious as ever in spite of all I can do; and people will be just as fond of their 'little jokes and old stories,' as if I had never combatted their inclination.

Since then I cannot utterly extirpate this unchristian practice, my next endeavour must be, to direct it properly, and improve it by some wholesome regulations.—And herein shall I imitate his most Christian Majesty, who by licensing a limited number of brothel-houses restricted an evil which he never could entirely have suppressed; prevented many of the ill consequences which naturally arise from promiscuous libertinism; and drew moreover from the profits no very inconsiderable revenue; thus, from the folly of individuals deriving advantage to the community. Equally advantageous to the public, and equally profitable to myself, will be the plan which I have laid down; and which I have already bestowed some pains to bring to perfection. I propose, if I meet with proper encouragement, making application to parliament for permission to open '*A Licensed Warehouse for Wit*,' and for a patent, entitling me to the sole vending and uttering wares of this kind, for a certain term of years. For this purpose, I have already laid in *Jokes, Jests, Witticisms,*

Morceaus, and *Bon-Mots* of every kind, to a very considerable amount, well worthy the attention of the public. I have *Epigrams* that want nothing but the sting; *Conundrums*, that need nothing but an explanation; *Rebusses* and *Acrostics*, that will be complete with the addition of the name only. These being in great request, may be had at an hour's warning. *Impromptus* will be got ready at a week's notice. For common and vernacular use, I have a long list of the most palpable *Puns* in the language, digested in alphabetical order; for these, I expect good sale at both the universities. *Jokes* of all kinds, ready *cut* and *dry*.

N. B. Proper allowance made to gentlemen of the law going on circuit; and to all second-hand venders of wit and retailers of repartee, who take large quantities.

N. B. *Attic Salt* in any quantities.

N. B. Most money for old *Jokes*.

N° 8. MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1787.

Majorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum
Aut pastor fuit, aut illud quod dicere nolo.—JUVENAL.

————————Your honour's ancient source
Was a poor shepherd's boy, or something worse.
DRYDEN.

TURNING over the other day some manuscripts belonging to the Griffin family, I accidentally cast my eyes on a parchment roll, carefully sealed, and inscribed 'The Pedigree.' Not having before considered that I was entitled to any ancestry, I began to feel an increased consequence, as I opened this sacred testimony of my being a son of Adam; and

was elated or depressed, according to the titles or occupations of my grandfathers from time immemorial.

I will not, courteous reader, detain thee with the honourable mention made of my family by bards of old; how, for instance, one of them being inspector of the gardens to a foreign potentate, was overdosed by one Hercules, who in the mean while robbed an orchard of certain golden-pippins; how, afterward, upon my ancestor's waking, he claimed them by right of discovery, and in farther proof of such right, most valiantly did beat his brains about his ears. How, another being appointed guardian of a woollen manufactory, was lulled to sleep by a certain adventurer from across the seas, who by that means stole his golden fleece (no impeachment on the sagacity or vigilance of my ancestor); the same spark having previously imposed on a wild and fiery bull who kept a mighty coil, and by putting a yoke on his neck subjected him to his own convenience. These, reader, I say, I will not detain thee with; but as I propose to make my after reflections on this parchment, the subject of this paper, shall proceed to them without farther preamble.

Pride, says the old Castilian, is that principle, which from a consciousness of inborn superiority, sets a man above the weaknesses of human nature; in prosperity enables him to preserve that dignity which his situation demands; and prevents him in adversity from consenting to any thing which might be derogatory to the principles of a man of honour. These, probably, or nearly these, are the ideas not of a patriotic but provincial bigot: but this is far from being a true definition of pride: and not only theoretical supposition, but practical observation, will daily enable us in some measure to controvert this reasoning. In order to reduce our inquiry as near the truth as possible, let us, by placing the ar-

guments of opposite prejudice in equal balances, suppose, as is generally the case, that a fair and candid decision will lay in the midway between them.

Pride, says the more polished, and of consequence less prejudiced man of the world, who has not had the honour to have been born on the other side of the Pyrenees, is a false principle of honour, seeking its gratification in the abject submission of others, and refining to extravagant punctilio and constrained resentment, that, which should only proceed from the genuine and lively emotions of the soul. It is a deformity of the mind, which subjects its possessor not only to the ridicule of all around him, but to infinite mortifications on the failure of that respect which he considers as due to his superior merit; a mortification, which, as few others view him in the same light, he must be frequently subjected to.

Though these principles are in all respects diametrically opposite, each of them have a specious appearance of truth. By tempering therefore each with the other, are we most likely to prove, whether pride is a principle to be cherished in the human heart or no. That pride, for instance, which when moderately indulged, fires a man with a just and noble sentiment for wrongs received, when carried farther, degenerates into punctilio. That which prevents a man from condescending to any thing unworthy himself, is a laudable principle; but when any thing a degree below his expectation or wishes is interpreted into an unworthy occupation, it becomes a folly. As to the mortification a man draws on himself, by an intemperate indulgence of this failing, it must be allowed, that the poison is in that respect its own antidote; and a mind so impregnated, is at least equal to supporting the ridicule which is levelled against it. Pride in short is of two kinds, defensive and offensive. While only defensive, it is far from being offensive, and serves as a sword in

the scabbard, which though harmless at the moment, protects the wearer from insult; when offensive, it is an attack on the rest of mankind, which calls for every one's exertion to repel it.

But I seem to be straying from my motto, which, as I am more particularly on the subject of family pride, calls on me to prove the descent of all our noble houses from shepherds, or what, as the poet sings, 'I am ashamed to say.' As in a former paper I invited my readers to a melancholy prospect in the terra incognita of probabilities; so will I now present them with a full as unflattering a retrospect in the terra firma of history.

Mankind are obliged to the so much talked of Golden age, in no other respect than for the quantity of harmonious ditties it has produced; and the pretty allusions concerning hanging woods, purling streams, the social intercourse of man and sheep, the great conveniency which swains of those days used to experience in their extraordinary powers of abstinence, &c. &c. which it has from time immemorial, and still continues to furnish to Arcadian garreteers. So far indeed was any age from being pre-existent to the iron, that the first crime committed by man, was a violation of the express law of God; the second of that of God and nature. From that time forward, particular facts, which prove the Antediluvian is no word to be applied to any thing over religious, are too numerous to dwell on. Suffice it to say, that the history of our right worshipful grandsires, both before and since the flood, does not at all tend to strengthen the opinion of the poet;

> Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem.—Hor.

> More vicious than their father's age
> Our sires begot the present race,
> Of actions impious, bold, and base;

And yet with crimes to us unknown,
Our sons shall make the coming age their own.
FRANCIS.

The conquest, wealth, luxury, and from thence the decline, of commonwealths, have in all ages been the theme as well of the moralist as the historian; these therefore let us pass by, and by looking back so far only as to the first population of this island, consider, whether the motto is not as applicable to the family pride of a true-born Briton, as that of a Roman citizen.

Notwithstanding the comfortable assertions of those ingenious gentlemen who wish to derive us from the illustrious race of Troy, our vicinity to the continent pleads hard for our being neither more or less than the descendants of a few shipwrecked fishermen; or what is worse, some light-footed heroes, who preferred the chance of escaping by sea, to the certainty of hanging on shore. Nor has this stock been much mended by the exotic shoots which have from time to time been ingrafted on it: such as the Romans, our first invaders, from whom, I believe, many genealogists of the present day pretend to derive their origin; though it scarce seems probable, that a people who had more pride of birth than any other, would have consented to forego their country and friends, in order to settle among a race of barbarians; unless perhaps some few who were not in the censor's list, and therefore in fact, no Romans, or some chance deserters, who took refuge among the natives to avoid military discipline. The Danes, a wretched band of adventurers, whose ferocity was their only distinguishing characteristic; whose only motive for forsaking their own country was poverty, and whose only view in invading Britain was plunder. The Saxons, in themselves a brave and ancient nation, but happily at that time delivered of their own ruffians in the persons of our conquerors. Last of all the Normans, under the

command of a bastard, put a finishing blow to the contentions of foreign powers for the possession of this unhappy island; and completed a mixture of bravoes, differing in their manners and interests, each (as not being attached to one head by any principles of loyalty and affection) naturally endeavouring to advance his own partisans; and smothering that jealousy from constraint, which only waited for an opportunity to burst into a flame.

From this engaging portrait of our forefathers, a Chinese philosopher would be led to suppose, that the antiquity of a British family was its greatest stain. But so far is this from being the case, that even in this miniature picture of mankind, family pride is no inconsiderable feature; and some there are, who, though their only merit lies in a crowded vault, from that single distinction consider themselves as infinitely superior to those *men of yesterday*, whose meritorious exertions evince them to be rather ambitious of founding, than boasting a noble family. But from a probable supposition that this extravagant principle can only have taken root in the minds of those from whom it is impossible to eradicate it, let us proceed to that family pride, which has at first a more specious appearance, and if ingrafted on notions naturally virtuous, is more likely to produce good effects; that, I mean, which boasts not so much the antiquity as eminence of its family. Even this, however, though to a noble mind it is an additional incentive to great and glorious actions, if it happens to be cherished by a wicked or even a passive disposition, will be found to be equally ridiculous with the other.

If the good qualities of mankind were like those of cattle, hereditary, a virtuous ancestry would be the most desirable possession a man could receive from inheritance; but if experience teaches us that they so seldom are, if from the adulation with which

men of family and fortune are generally from their infancy surrounded, it is very improbable that they should be oftener virtuous. What does a man derive from a noble family unless, that by the profusion of light in the back ground, the shade in front is more effectually exposed. To those few, therefore, to those chosen few, who consider that a noble family reflects either honour or disgrace only according to the use made of it by themselves; who reflect, that it is nothing more than a splendid burden, an additional tax on them to add one more to the distinguished list, to them may a degree of family pride be considered as an advantage. And among those, our little world may boast of having ushered no inconsiderable share into the larger theatre of life, who have since distinguished themselves as good and great men. Nor in any other respect does a public education so much evince its superiority, as in the equitable treatment our citizens receive from each other; and which, says Dr. Moore, 'often serves as an antidote against the childish sophistical notions, in which weak or designing men endeavour to inspire them in after life.'—C.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

No NOVELIST, TWO SENEX'S, and the COUNTRY GIRL, are received. The latter has a full right to the indulgence she desires, and will much oblige me by her future correspondence. I am very loth to refuse any thing to so fair a petitioner, as I take it for granted MATRONA is, and grieve that it is not in my power to accept her invitation at present, and oblige her by the interview which she solicits. In any thing else she may command me.

N° 9. MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 1787.

Sit quodvis simplex duntaxat et unum.—Hor.
Be what you will so you be still the same.—Rosc.

There are few precepts, dictated like the above, by judgment and experience, which, though originally confined to a particular application (as this to the formation of dramatic character) may not be adopted with success in the several branches of the same science, and even transferred into another. The direction which the poet gives us here, to preserve a regard for simplicity and uniformity, may be applied to the general design and main structure of a poem; and if we allow them a still greater latitude of interpretation, may be found to convey a very useful rule with respect to the inferior component parts which constitute a work.

A venerable pile of Gothic architecture, viewed at a distance, or after the sober hand of time has stripped it of the false glare of meretricious ornament, communicates a sensation which the same object under a close inspection in its highest degree of perfection, was incapable of producing; when the attention, solicited by a thousand minutiæ with which the hand of caprice and superstition had crowded its object, was unavoidably diverted from the contemplation of the main design.

In all points which admit of hesitation, the sister sciences are found to throw a corresponding lustre on each other. The impropriety of ill-judged ornament, though connected as in the above instance with all that is awful and venerable, must be evident to the most superficial observer, and this circumstance should lead us to conjecture, that the

same principle existed in a similar, though superior science. Originality of sentiment, vivacity of thought, and loftiness of language, may conduct the reader to the end of a work, though awkwardly designed and injudiciously constructed; while the nicest adherence to poetic rule would be found insufficient to compensate for meanness of thought, or vulgarity of expression. That these two faults should infallibly destroy all title which any writer might otherwise have to the name of poet, should seem self evident, and yet a fault which appears to be a composition of them both, has, in some instances, past without reprehension, I mean allusion to local circumstance. I shall therefore make this paper the vehicle of a few observations on this practice.

Nothing can be more directly adverse to the spirit of poetry, considered under one of its definitions as a universal language, than whatever confines it to the comprehension of a single people, or a particular period of time.

Blackmore, a man now grown to a by-word in criticism, in the original structure of his poem was little, if at all, inferior to the great prototypes of antiquity; but that simplicity and uniformity so visible in the first design, was in every other respect conformably to the taste of his time, violated and neglected. It is said, that the most desolate deserts of Africa are distinguished by little insulated spots, clothed with perpetual verdure; and it sometimes happens, that beautiful passages present themselves in the Prince Arthur, as in the first book,

> The Heavens serenely smil'd, and every sail,
> Fill'd its broad bosom with th' indulgent gale.

But when lines like these occur, we must consider it, to borrow an expression from a contemporary poet, a gift no less

> Than that of manna in the wilderness.

Scriptural allusions like the foregoing, were much in fashion amongst the poets of that period; and in this particular, so earnest a follower of it was not to be left behind; he has accordingly introduced his enchanter, Merlin, building seven altars, offering upon each a bullock and a ram, and attempting to curse the army of the hero, in imitation of Balaam, and with the same success.

Dryden himself is strongly tinctured with the taste of the times; and those Dalilahs of the town, to use his own expression, are plentifully scattered throughout his works, esteemed in the present age for those passages only in which he ventured to oppose his own taste to that of his readers, and which have already past the ordeal of unmerited censure.

Nor is that narrowness of conception which confines a work to the comprehension of a particular portion of individuals, less reprehensible or less repugnant to the essential principles of poetry; and of this defect innumerable instances occur in both the authors above cited, with this difference, that in one instance we contemplate with regret the situation of an eminent genius constrained by his exigencies to postpone the powers of his own taste, and submit his judgment to the arbitrary dominion of a prevailing mode; while in the other we view with indifference, an author, spoiled indeed by the taste of the times in which he lived, but who, had he not adopted theirs, had most probably succeeded as ill by following his own. Nothing is so common, as in both these writers to meet with expressions and allusions drawn from the meanest mechanical employments; at present infinitely disgusting to the general scholar, and (a proof of the necessity of observing the rule we have endeavoured to illustrate) to a foreigner, acquainted only with the learned part of our language, entirely unintelligible*.

* I would not here be understood to hint at any similarity in

In the earlier stages of civilization, while the bonds of society hang yet loose upon the individual, before the benefits of mutual assistance and dependence are felt or understood, the savage, elate with the idea of absolute independence, and unacquainted with all the advantages which accompany the arts of society, looks down with supreme contempt on a state, whose every individual is entirely dependent upon and connected with the community*. The wretched Esquimaux give themselves the exclusive title of *men*, and the Indian of North America, bestows on the Europeans, as compared with himself, the epithet of the *accursed race*.

In a state of absolute barbarism the arts of life are few, and agreeably to that all-sufficiency which the savage so much affects, practised and understood by each individual. The Indian, unacquainted with the arts of polished life, is to himself, what society is to the members which compose it: he raises himself the roof of his humble hut, and ventures upon the ocean in the canoe which his own hands have hollowed; his weapons for war or for the chase are such as his own industry, or sometimes a casual intercourse with politer nations, have furnished for him†. The component members of barbarous societies are seldom numerous, owing to the extreme difficulty which attends the education of infancy among the hazards and hardships of savage life, and joined to it produces that extreme tenderness which all uncivilized communities entertain for the life of an individual. Where the numbers are comparatively few, the principle of patriotism is concentrated; the loss or misconduct of a North American Indian would be more sensibly felt by his tribe, than that of a thousand Englishmen, by the parent country.

the original genius of these authors; were I to draw the line of affinity, I should call Blackmore the caricatura of Dryden.

* Robertson's History of America, book iv. † Ibid.

It remains after a consideration of the causes, to trace their effects in the artless essays of the more remote periods. Ossian's poems, if allowed to be authentic, are the only specimen of this species generally known; Homer being, according to the testimony of Aristotle, posterior to a long line of poets, his predecessors and perhaps his patterns: the decided preference given through every poem, to the nation, the family, and person, of the poet, strongly mark the national character as well as that of the times. Allusions to the inferior arts are so unusual and so simple as must speak them in their first period of progression; or evince a taste and judgment in the author far beyond the times in which he is supposed to have flourished. He is himself, agreeable to that idea of self-importance, the invariable attendant on savage life, the hero of his own tale. Filial duty, and regard to the merits of an illustrious warrior, might contribute to give Fingal a conspicuous character in poems, the production of his son; but no reason can be given why Ossian, the *bard of song*, should be the hero of it. 'The battle,' says Regnor Lodbrog, a prince, pirate, and poet, of a succeeding age, 'is grateful to me as the smile of a virgin in the bloom of youth; as the kiss of a young widow in a retired apartment.' An egotism which moderns must suppose agreeable to the character of those times. The pride of family, a prevailing passion where arts and commerce have not set mankind on a level, was indulged by the poet, who comprised in his profession that of the genealogist. Homer frequently traced the descent of his heroes into remote and fabulous antiquity; probably with a view to gratify such of his patrons as piqued themselves on their pedigree.

The poetry of ruder ages is seldom distinguished for elegance of diction or variety of imagery; yet there are advantages so strongly peculiar to it, as must raise it high in the esteem of all admirers of

nature, while yet simple and unsophisticated. The state of the arts, as yet rude and imperfect, renders it impossible to deviate from simplicity. The distinctions of property being as yet faintly delineated, no idea of superiority can obtain but what arises from personal qualifications; and poetic praise, unprostituted to power and wealth, must be the genuine tribute of gratitude and admiration. That property was in a very unsettled state in the days of Homer, may be gathered from numberless passages in his writings; among the calamities which awaited an aged father on the death of his only son, the plunder of his possessions is mentioned; and Achilles laments, that life, unlike every other human possession, was not to be obtained by theft. Accordingly in the epithets which accompany the name of each hero, through the Iliad and Odyssey, we see no allusions to the adventitious circumstances of wealth and power, if we except the title of *lord of rich Mycenæ,* sometimes, though rarely bestowed on Agamemnon. While the subtlety of Ulysses, the swiftness of Achilles, the courage and strength of Diomed, are mentioned as often as the names of those heroes occur.

The intermediate step between barbarity and perfection, is perhaps the least favourable to the cultivation of poetry; for the necessity of writing with simplicity is taken away long before its beauty is discovered or attended to. The arts, if we may believe the picture of them, as exhibited in the shield of Achilles, had attained this intermediate stage of their progress in the days of Homer; and accordingly we find in the works of that great master, some allusions to the meaner arts, as well as illustrations drawn from them; which, however the antiquary might regard as throwing light on so remote a period, criticism must reject as repugnant to that simplicity and universality which form the essential

characteristics of poetry. When Hector tells Paris, that he deserved a coat of stone, that is, to be stoned to death, I cannot help suspecting it to have been a cant word of that time; and am rather disgusted than satisfied, to find the security which Neptune gives for Mars, was agreeable to the form of procedure in the Athenian courts. Though in this instance a modern, and especially a modern of this country, may be easily prejudiced; the laws here, by the uncouthness of their language, and other particularities, wearing an air of ridicule by no means connected with the ideas of laws in general. Yet, whatever allowances we admit in consideration of the distant period which produced this patriarch of poetry and literature, and however we abstract ourselves from the prevailing prejudices of modern manners, we still find ourselves better pleased with those images, which, from their simplicity in so long a period, have undergone the smallest variation. The following lines are perhaps the most pleasing to a modern reader of any in the whole Iliad.

> What time in some sequestered vale,
> The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal;
> When his tir'd arm refuse the axe to rear,
> And claim a respite from the sylvan war;
> But not till half the prostrate forest lay,
> Stretch'd in long ruin, and expos'd to day.—POPE.

And it is a curious consideration, that in a period which has exhausted the variety of wealth and vanity, the simple life of the labourer has not undergone the most trifling alteration. Milton, a strict observer as well as a constant imitator of the ancients, has adopted the same idea in the following lines,

> What time the labour'd ox,
> With loosen'd traces from the furrow came,
> And the swink'd hedger at his supper sat.

The father of English poetry, like that of the Grecian, lived in a period little favourable to sim-

plicity in poetry; and several meannesses occur throughout his works, which in an age more refined, or more barbarous, he must have avoided. We see among the *worthie* acts of *Duke* Theseus,

> How he took the nobil cite after,
> And brent the walls and tore down roof and rafter.

And among the horrid images which crowd the temple of Mars,

> The child stranglid in the cradil,
> The coke scaldid for alle his long ladil.

The state of equipoise between horror and laughter, which the mind must here experience, may be ranked among its most unpleasing sensations.—The period at which the arts attain to their highest degree of perfection, may be esteemed more favourable to the productions of the Muses, than either of the foregoing; the mind is indulged in free retrospect of antiquity, and sometimes in conjectural glimpses of futurity; with such a field open before him, the objects which we must suppose should more immediately attract the attention of the poet, would be the failure or success of his predecessors; and the causes to which either was to be attributed. Pope has fully availed himself of the dear-bought experience of all who went before him; there is perhaps no poet more entirely free from this failing. I shall however only cite one instance in which he may seem to have carried his regard for simplicity so far, as to shew himself guilty of inaccuracy and inattention.

> The hungry judges now the sentence sign,
> And wretches hang that jurymen may dine.

That judges in England never *sign* a sentence is well known; and hunger, whatever effect it might have had on the jurymen of ancient days, with those of modern times, seems to operate rather as an incitement to mercy. *Clifden's proud Alcove* has not at

present, and probably never had any existence; but the fault, if any there is, seems rather that of the language than that of the poet: or perhaps, after all, it was mere penury of rhyme, and a distress similar to that which made him in another place hunt his poor dab-chick into a *copse* where it was never seen but in the Dunciad.

After so much said on the subject of local allusions, and terms of art, it cannot but occur to me, that I have myself sometimes fallen into the error which I have here reprehended, and adopted phrases and expressions unintelligible, except to the little circle to which my labours were at first confined; an error I shall cautiously avoid for the future: for how little claim soever the lucubrations of GREGORY GRIFFIN may have to public notice, or a protracted term of existence, he is unwilling to abridge either by wilful continuance in an acknowledged error.

N° 10. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1787.

Et silicis venis abstrusum, excuderet ignem.—VIRG.

And struck th' imprison'd spark from veins of stone.

MANKIND in general, when they contemplate the records of those illustrious for patriotism, philosophy, poetry, or any other qualities which entitle them to immortality, are inclined to complain of the dearth of abilities and paucity of true genius observable in all ages. Genius, exclaims the discontented complainant, is given but with a sparing hand; instead of moving in a regular orbit as the planet, its course is lawless as the comet's; instead of diffusing the permanent rays of the sun, it glitters only with the dazzling glare

of the lightning; it is quick and transitory, and like the phœnix, appears not once in a century. Such is the usual outcry of those, who love to turn good into evil! to depreciate the dignity of man, and undervalue the works of their Creator. The arguments by which they support this hypothesis are plausible; they observe, that illustrious men have generally flourished not in a continued series, when the loss of one was supplied by a successor equally capable, but in a collective body. After their demise, nature, as exhausted by such an unusual effort, has sunk into a lethargy, and slept for ages. These sons of fame, like the brighter constellations of the heavens, obscure by their superior splendour the infinite hosts of stars which are scattered through the regions of endless space. To establish this position, they instance the noted reigns of Augustus, Charles, Ann, and Louis. The respectable names of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius, Livy, and other glories of this learned age are produced; Milton, Dryden, Tillotson, and Clarendon, with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot Bolingbroke, Addison, Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, seem to corroborate this assertion. But let us examine with impartiality, and the deception will be detected. Can we suppose, that nature has scattered her blessings with more profusion to one age than another; or, that like an unfeeling step-mother, she has robbed one child of its portion to enrich the other? Rather has not the universality of her influence been extended to all? Whence then, it is required, whence originates that inequality of genius and learning, which is so incontrovertibly conspicuous in the annals of history? The answer is brief, from the difference of cultivation. The most fertile fields, will, if neglected, be overrun with weeds; and the bramble will choke the luxuriance of the floweret. How many neglected spots are concealed in the wilds of Africa; how many tracts seemingly op-

pressed with the curse of sterility, have, by the assistance of art teemed with the fruits of cultivation. The human mind is that luxuriant field, rich in the gifts of nature, but requiring the fostering care of education, to raise the imperfect seed to the maturity of the full grown crop.

I will venture to affirm, that neither the dark ages of the latter Roman empire, nor the darker ones which succeeded (the period when human nature was at its lowest ebb, and had relapsed into the barbarism from which the superior wisdom of the first race of man had raised it), were deficient in genius, if opportunity had called forth its powers. Statius and Claudian undoubtedly possessed the fire so requisite to form the poet; and the excellent Boetius, martyred by the cruel policy of the imperial court, was born to grace a more splendid era. To descend still deeper into this region of darkness, even so late as the closing years of the Greek empire, the princess Anna Commena, to the eminence of her illustrious birth, joined the milder glories of arts and literature. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and the other schoolmen shew an acuteness of reason, and comprehension of mind, employed indeed on subtle niceties and frivolous distinctions; but which, under the direction of a better taste, might have explored the profoundest depths of true philosophy. The Rosicrucians, with other chemical projectors, in the course of an extravagant search after an imaginary menstruum, stumbled on many useful discoveries in that curious science. Pope Silvester, with his illustrious follower, Friar Bacon, who were for their extraordinary knowledge deemed magicians by the ignorant multitude, and who were both, for the honour of our nation, Englishmen, directing their studies to the proper ends of philosophy, were the harbingers of that glorious light which has since blazed out. Charlemagne and Alfred are characters which might

dignify the annals of any historian, as warriors and legislators; the first softened the rigours of the feudal system so peculiarly adapted to bind mankind in indissoluble chains; the other blessed his native land with liberty, and laid the first foundation of that constitution, which has since proved the envy and admiration of Europe. These few illustrious names, which are the sole ornaments of so many ages only feebly enlightened, were not able to dispel the surrounding clouds; their rays, scattered through such an extensive space, only served to make

Darkness visible.

And when the poet exclaimed

Sint Mæcænates, non deerunt Flacce, Marones.

Let Sheffields smile, and Drydens still shall write,

he asserted that, to which experience has since given the sanction of truth.

It is not to be doubted, but that many a man, whose powers of mind might have carried him to the highest pitch of human glory, has languished in obscurity for want of those opportunities, or that patronage, which calls forth the powers of the soul. Those few to whom their better fortune has granted this envied lot, sufficiently prove this position; and many of the most excellent of the latter Roman emperors, left the more humble roofs of their native cottages, for the splendid magnificence of the imperial palace.

But the land of liberty is the soil favourable to the rearing these latent seeds; and it has been observed, that though genius may flourish awhile under the exotic warmth of arbitrary power, its blossom is but perishable: it languishes under the nipping blasts of oppression; and pines for the more congenial sun of freedom. The iron sway of slavery crushes the soul as well as body.

Animum quoque prægravat una
Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ.

Weighs down the portion of celestial birth,
The breath of God, and fixes it to earth.—FRANCIS.

That I may not seem to assert an improbability, let us examine the different states of literature in the commonwealths of Greece and Rome, under the dominion of the Cæsars. An objection is now easily started, viz. that the Augustan age is the great era of Roman literature; and that under the commonwealth the advances towards politer arts were slow and difficult. The fact is, that the Romans, during the first centuries, were too deeply engaged in their foreign and domestic wars, to attend to the milder occupations of peace. Self-preservation naturally engages the attention of man, prior to all other considerations; when that is secured, he has leisure to look around him, and make his first attempts in the sciences. In the earlier, rude, and martial times the trumpet drowned the notes of the lyre; in those times, therefore, the genius most suitable to the age, shone with distinguished lustre; this was the age of patriotism and conquest, and military merit was the only certain road to the dignities of the republic. When Rome was subject to Cæsar, her empire extended over the then known world. The Grecian elegance had softened her rougher genius; and science had polished the ferocity of her manners. The laurel of conquest faded before the olive of peace; and literary merit became the object of attention. Augustus only established that, of which others had laid the foundations; Ennius, Terence, Lucretius, Catullus, and Sallust, were prior to him; and the Roman eloquence, which was born, and which died with Cicero, sunk under the malignity of his influence. It is worth remarking, that though the Augustan age produced the best poets, yet eloquence fled with freedom; after the death of

Cicero she degenerated from her purer strains, into the laboured phrases of affected declamation. Poetry, which is noted for its suppleness, flourished only for a few years; and probably owed its temporary vigour to the mean prostitution of its talents, in flattering the enslaver of his country, and the tyrant of the world.

Greece on the contrary produced a continued series of great and learned men; she was not like Rome, forced to struggle for her liberty and existence against the jealousy of surrounding states. After the decisive battles of Marathon, Platæa, and Salamis, her internal dissensions were her only enemies; but even these promoted rather than impeded the powers of her genius. To the Peloponnesian war we owe the history of Thucydides, the funeral orations of Pericles and Plato, and to the treachery of Philip the sublime invectives of Demosthenes; but when the conquering eagle of Rome, under the pretence of protecting, enslaved the country, from that moment her genius withered; and the only writers she afterward produced, Polybius in particular, instead of recording the glories of their native country, celebrated the exploits of Rome. Rome therefore, now the uncontrolled mistress of the world, was expected to excel in arts as well as arms; under Augustus, as before observed, she flourished for a time, but under the succeeding emperors she relapsed into the ignorance, though she possessed not the virtues of the consular state. The feeble efforts which learning afterward made to recover her ancient pre-eminence, seem to confirm the position, that under liberty alone she can acquire a permanent strength.

Under the happy reigns of Vespasian, Trajan, and the better emperors, the short-lived ray of returning freedom awaked her from her lethargy; and Juvenal, the Plinies, and Tacitus, are enrolled

in the last list of Roman worthies.—The works of the two Plinies might have been produced under any reign, however tyrannical.—The studies of the naturalist could never awaken the jealousy of the most capricious tyrant; and the panegyric of the younger Pliny was a piece of complimentary flattery, which must be acceptable to the ears of any prince. Of his letters it has been truly observed, that they are only elegant trifles. In Cicero's collection we find a history of the times, the characters of the greatest men delineated with spirit, and his sentiments delivered with a Roman freedom. Pliny was overawed by the terrors of despotism, and dared not to venture on topics which might rouse the anger of his Sovereign; but that Juvenal and Tacitus adorned this period, must uncontestibly be the effect of at least some degree of liberty; otherwise the unsparing lash of the satirist would not have attacked the most powerful men of Rome; or the bold pen of the historian dared to display the actions of the former emperors with such freedom of censure, so odiously and yet so justly. He would have been contented with a bare relation, and left the reader to make those observations, which though he could not but have felt, he would have been afraid to give vent to; especially when Juvenal, in the reign of Domitian, had been banished for a slight reflection on an insignificant actor.

As in the course of this paper many of the great names of antiquity have been mentioned, I cannot help noticing the assertion of a very learned man, in which his partiality for the ancients seems to have hurried him on beyond due lengths. I refer the reader to the 127th paper, 4th vol. of the Adventurer, from whence the following is extracted, 'The age will never again return, when a Pericles, after walking with Plato in a portico built by Phidias, and painted by Apelles, might repair to hear a

pleading of Demosthenes,' or a tragedy of Sophocles.'

Unless this passage is more accurately considered, it seems to give the decisive turn against the moderns; and presents a formidable list of great names to which we have but few to oppose. But if we examine the chronological order, we shall find, that Pericles, Phidias, and Sophocles, were hardly contemporaries, Pericles dying in the 87th Olympiad; but Demosthenes, who was contemporary with Apelles, did not pronounce his first Philippic till the 107th, and Plato died in the 108th. The reader who would wish to know the more particular dates, I refer to Tallent's chronology, who has regulated his by Scaliger's tables.—From this it will appear, that though a Pericles might have walked in a portico built by Phidias, it could not have been painted by Apelles; and though he might have heard a tragedy of Sophocles, he could not have conversed with Plato, or repaired to a pleading of Demosthenes. I might with equal justice say, the time will never return, when an Alfred, after walking with Bacon in a portico built by Wren, or painted by West, might repair to hear a speech of Chatham's, or a tragedy of Shakspeare's. Surely this is an unfair mode of comparison, and to take a hint from his own motto,

> Si veteres ita miratur laudatque,
> Ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat.
>
> But oft they labour under great mistakes,
> As when their ancients lavishly they raise,
> Above all modern rivalship and praise.—FRANCIS.

But to return to my subject. From the variety of concurring accidents and combination of circumstances, which are so necessary if not to form, at least to force genius into notice, it is more to be wondered at, that so many great characters have, than that more have not existed. True it is, that there are some, who are by nature endowed with

such powers of mind, that they have risen superior to all surrounding impediments; but the number of these transcendent men are comparatively few with those who have rendered themselves eminent from the fortuitous concurrence of lucky circumstances. To any one who attentively considers the variety of characters which may be met with in a large public school, the following will appear no unimportant circumstance. He cannot but observe the great number of boys, who by their natural abilities and early attainments seem to promise future greatness; and who, provided they had all an equal chance of succeeding in the world, might attain the heights of excellence. Yet how few of them in their maturer years fulfil those expectations, which the earliest periods of their life so justly excited. The reason is evident; when at school they had full and fair scope for the exercise of their talents; they were fired with emulation, animated by the hope of glory. Envy had not as yet tainted the purity of the breast; and every one honestly confessed his admiration of their superior powers. When they enter the larger theatre of the world, the case is widely different; the passions then take a larger range; envy, and all the blacker ones, expand themselves. One man hides himself in the obscurity of what mistaken philosophy calls a life of retirement and ease, that is, of indolence and sloth; another destroys himself in the excesses of licentious pleasure; here distressed merit pines in want and obscurity; there the bent of the soul is mistaken, and the injudicious and arbitrary will of a parent or a guardian forces it into that line, where its lustre is darkened and its powers fail. For the human mind, in spite of the pride of wisdom, and vanity of self-complacency, is confined to a narrow sphere, though some men by the universality of their attainments, and versatility of their powers, seem to contradict this assertion; yet, those

instances are so rare, as scarce to form an exception to the general rule. Newton is great as an astronomer, and Chatham as a statesman, when confined to their own proper paths, their abilities are wonderful, their glory consequently great; but place a Chatham at the astronomical calculation of a Newton, or a Newton at the helm of state, their respective worth is immediately lost, and they both would sink to the level of common mortals. Genius then, if not totally buried, is often perverted, and its powers rendered ineffectual. Pope observed of a certain illustrious character, '*How sweet an Ovid in a Murray lost,*' and it is not to be doubted, but that the abilities of many have been equally distorted from their natural bent.

I am inclined to think, that the maxim,

That as the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd,

is not universally though generally true. Rather like a tree forced from its natural situation, it will, when left to the exercise of its own powers, recoil with the greater violence. We may remember that Addison was made a secretary of state, and Swift, if he had listened to King William, would have been a cornet of horse. How little the talents of the one were adapted to his office is well known; what a figure the author of the Tale of the Tub would have made as a cornet, I leave to my readers to judge. The attic elegance and polished wit of Addison was lost amidst the turbulence of state intrigues; and the keen, sarcastic genius of Swift was by no means fitted for the camp; unless it can be proved, that humour can gain a battle, or satire take a town.—A.

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N° 11. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1787.

Res gestæ regumque, ducumque, et tristia bella,
Quo scribi possint numero, monstravit Homerus.—HORACE.

By Homer taught the modern poet sings,
In Epic strains, of heroes, wars, and kings.—FRANCIS.

THERE are certain forms and etiquettes in life, which, though the neglect of them does not amount to the commission of a crime, or the violation of a duty, are yet so established by example, and sanctioned by custom, as to pass into statutes, equally acknowledged by society, and almost equally binding to individuals, with the laws of the land, or the precepts of morality. A man guilty of breaking these, though he cannot be transported for a felon, or indicted for treasonable practices, is yet, in the high court of custom, branded as a flagrant offender against decorum, as notorious for an unprecedented infringement on propriety.

There is no race of men on whom these laws are more severe than authors; and no species of authors more subject to them, than periodical essayists. Homer having prescribed the form, or, to use a more modern phrase, *set the fashion* of epic poems, whoever presumes to deviate from his plan, must not hope to participate his dignity: and whatever method the Spectator, the Guardian, and others, who first adopted this species of writing, have pursued in their undertaking, is set down as a rule for the conduct of their followers; which, whoever is bold enough to transgress is accused of a deviation from the original design, and a breach of established regulation.

It has hitherto been customary for all periodical writers, to take some opportunity, in the course of

their labours, to display their critical abilities, either by making observations on some popular author, and work of known character, or by bringing forth the performances of hidden merit, and throwing light on genius in obscurity. To the critiques of the Spectator, Shakspeare, and more particularly, Milton, are indebted for no inconsiderable share of the reputation, which they now so universally enjoy; and by his means were the ruder graces, and more simple beauties of Chevy Chace held up to the public view, and recommended to general admiration.

I should probably be accused of swerving from the imitation of so great an example, were not I to take occasion to shew that I too am not entirely destitute of abilities of this kind; but that by possessing a decent share of critical discernment, and critical jargon, I am capable of becoming a very tolerable commentator. For the proof of which, I shall rather prefer calling the attention of my readers to an object, as yet untreated of by any of my immediate predecessors, than venture to throw in my observations on any work which has before passed the ordeal of frequent examination. And this I shall do for two reasons; partly, because were I to choose a field, how fertile soever, of which many others had before me been reaping the fruits, mine would be at best but the gleanings of criticism; and partly, from a more interested view, from a selfish desire of accumulated praise; since, by making a work, as yet almost wholly unknown, the subject of my consideration, I shall acquire the reputation of taste, as well as judgment; of judiciousness in selection, as well as justness in observation;—of propriety in choosing the object as well as skill in using the language, of commentary.

The Epic poem on which I shall ground my present critique, has for its chief characteristics, brevity and simplicity. The author,—whose name I lament

that I am, in some degree, prevented from consecrating to immortal fame, by not knowing what it is—the author I say, has not branched his poem into excressences of episode, or prolixities of digression; it is neither variegated with diversity of unmeaning similitudes, nor glaring with the varnish of unnatural metaphor. The whole is plain and uniform; so much so indeed, that I should hardly be surprised if some morose readers were to conjecture, that the poet had been thus simple rather from necessity than choice; that he had been restrained not so much by chastity of judgment, as sterility of imagination.

Nay, some there may be perhaps, who will dispute his claim to the title of an Epic poet, and will endeavour to degrade him even to the rank of a ballad-monger. But I, as his commentator, will contend for the dignity of my author; and will plainly demonstrate his poem to be an Epic poem, agreeable to the example of all poets, and the consent of all critics heretofore.

First, it is universally agreed, that an Epic poem should have three component parts; a beginning, a middle, and an end; secondly, it is allowed, that it should have one grand action, or main design, to the forwarding of which, all the parts of it should directly or indirectly tend; and that this design should be in some measure consonant with, and conducive to, the purposes of morality;—and thirdly, it is indisputably settled, that it should have a hero. I trust that in none of these points the poem before us will be found deficient. There are other inferior properties, which I shall consider in due order.

Not to keep my readers longer in suspense, the subject of the poem is, '*The Reformation of the Knave of Hearts.*' It is not improbable, that some may object to me that a *Knave* is an unworthy hero for an epic poem; that a hero ought to be all that is great and good. The objection is frivolous. The

greatest work of this kind that the world ever produced, has '*The Devil*' for its hero; and supported as my author is by so great a precedent, I contend, that his hero is a very decent hero; and especially as he has the advantage of Milton's, by reforming at the end, is evidently entitled to a competent share of celebrity.

I shall now proceed to the more immediate examination of the poem in its different parts. The beginning, say the critics, ought to be plain and simple; neither embellished with the flowers of poetry, nor turgid with pomposity of diction. In this how exactly does our author conform to the established opinion! he begins thus,

> The Queen of Hearts
> She made some Tarts.

Can any thing be more clear! more natural! more agreeable to the true spirit of simplicity! Here are no tropes, no figurative expressions, not even so much as an invocation to the muse. He does not detain his readers by any needless circumlocution; by unnecessarily informing them, what he *is* going to sing; or still unnecessarily enumerating what he *is not* going to sing: but according to the precepts of Horace,

> in medias res,
> Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit,——

That is, he at once introduces us, and sets us on the most easy and familiar footing imaginable, with her Majesty of Hearts, and interests us deeply in her domestic concerns. But to proceed,

> The Queen of Hearts
> She made some Tarts,
> All on a summer's day.

Here indeed the prospect brightens, and we are led to expect some liveliness of imagery, some warmth of poetical colouring; but here is no such thing. There is no task more difficult to a poet than

rejection. Ovid, among the ancients, and Dryden among the moderns, were perhaps the most remarkable for the want of it. The latter from the haste in which he generally produced his compositions, seldom paid much attention to the '*limæ labor*,' the labour of correction, and seldom therefore rejected the assistance of any idea that presented itself. Ovid, not content with catching the leading features of any scene or character, indulged himself in a thousand minutiæ of description, a thousand puerile prettinesses, which were in themselves uninteresting, and took off greatly from the effect of the whole; as the numberless suckers, and straggling branches of a fruit-tree, if permitted to shoot out unrestrained, while they are themselves barren and useless, diminish considerably the vigour of the parent stock. Ovid had more genius, but less judgment than Virgil; Dryden more imagination, but less correctness than Pope; had they not been deficient in these points, the former would certainly have equalled, the latter infinitely outshone the merits of his countryman. Our author was undoubtedly possessed of that power which they wanted; and was cautious not to indulge too far the sallies of a lively imagination. Omitting therefore any mention of sultry Sirius,—sylvan shade,—sequestered glade,—verdant hills,—purling rills,—mossy mountains,—gurgling fountains, &c. &c. he simply tells us that it was '*All on a Summer's Day*.' For my own part, I confess, that I find myself rather flattered than disappointed; and consider the poet as rather paying a compliment to the abilities of his readers, than baulking their expectations. It is certainly a great pleasure to see a picture well painted; but it is a much greater to paint it well oneself. This therefore I look upon as a stroke of excellent management in the poet. Here every reader is at liberty to gratify his own taste; to design for himself just what sort of '*Summer's Day*' he likes

best; to choose his own scenery; dispose his lights and shades as he pleases; to solace himself with a rivulet, or a horse-pond, a shower, or a sun-beam, a grove, or a kitchen-garden, according to his fancy. How much more considerate this, than if the poet had, from an affected accuracy of description, thrown us into an unmannerly perspiration by the heat of the atmosphere; forced us into a landscape of his own planning, with perhaps a paltry good for nothing zephyr or two, and a limited quantity of wood and water. All this Ovid would undoubtedly have done. Nay, to use the expression of a learned brother commentator, '*quovis pignore dicertem*,' 'I would lay any wager,' that he would have gone so far as to tell us what the tarts were made of; and perhaps wandered into an episode on the art of preserving cherries. But our poet, above such considerations, leaves every reader to choose his own ingredients, and sweeten them to his own liking; wisely forseeing, no doubt, that the more palatable each had rendered them to his own taste, the more he would be affected at their approaching loss.

All on a summer's day.

I cannot leave this line without remarking, that one of the Scribleri, a descendant of the famous Martinus, has expressed his suspicions of the text being corrupted here, and proposes, instead of '*All on*' reading '*Alone*,' alleging, in favour of this alteration, the effect of solitude in raising the passions. But Hiccius Doctius, a High Dutch commentator, one nevertheless well versed in British literature, in a note of his usual length and learning, has confuted the arguments of Scriblerus. In support of the present reading, he quotes a passage from a poem written about the same period with our author's, by the celebrated Johannes Pastor*, entitled '*An Ele-*

* More commonly known, I believe, by the appellation of Jack Shepherd.

giac Epistle to the Turnkey of Newgate,' wherein the gentleman declares, that rather indeed in compliance with an old custom, than to gratify any particular wish of his own, he is going

All hanged for to be
Upon that fatal Tyburn tree.

Now as nothing throws greater light on an author, than the concurrence of a contemporary writer, I am inclined to be of Hiccius's opinion, and to consider the '*All*' as an elegant expletive, or, as he more aptly phrases it, '*elegans expletivum.*' The passage therefore must stand thus,

The Queen of Hearts
She made some Tarts
All on a summer's day.

And thus ends the first part, or beginning, which is simple and unembellished; opens the subject in a natural and easy manner; excites, but does not too far gratify our curiosity: for a reader of accurate observation may easily discover, that the hero of the poem has not, as yet, made his appearance.

I could not continue my examination at present through the whole of this poem, without far exceeding the limits of a single paper. I have therefore divided it into two; but shall not delay the publication of the second to another week, as that, besides breaking the connexion of criticism, would materially injure the unities of the poem.—B.

I cannot commit this paper to the public, without taking notice of an opinion, which has lately been disseminated by some people, viz. That the MICROCOSM, previous to its publication, is subjected to the criticism of my superiors, or (in their own words) '*looked over by ushers.*' This idea is wrong in two points; first as being miserably *unclassical* in

phrase, and secondly as being extremely *false* in *information*.

Slaves cannot live in *England*; *Ireland* enjoys an immunity from *toads*; in a similar degree is the climate and constitution of *Eton*, utterly unadapted to the existence of '*ushers*.' And however flattering it might be to *Gregory Griffin*, that his works should be considered as the compositions of riper years; he cannot but think this opinion an unworthy compliment to the genius and abilities of those, to whom they are, in part, ascribed.

I think it therefore my duty by this declaration, to '*take all my imperfections on my own head*;' and to assure the public, that little as the merit may be of these compositions, they are not '*ushered*' into the world by those, who are degraded by the supposition; the assistant directors of *Eton* education.

N° 12. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1787.

Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.—HORACE.

From his first entrance to the closing scene,
Let him one equal character maintain.—FRANCIS.

HAVING thus gone through the first part, or beginning of the poem, we may, naturally enough, proceed to the consideration of the second.

The second part, or middle, is the proper place for bustle and business; for incident and adventure.

The Knave of Hearts
He stole those Tarts.

Here attention is awakened; and our whole souls are intent upon the first appearance of the hero.

Some readers may perhaps be offended at his making his *entré* in so disadvantageous a character as that of a thief. To this I plead precedent.

The hero of the Iliad, as I observed in a former paper, is made to lament very pathetically, that 'life is not like all other possessions, to be acquired by theft.' A reflection, in my opinion, evidently shewing, that, if he did refrain from the practice of this ingenious art, it was not from want of an inclination that way. We may remember too, that in Virgil's poem, almost the first light in which the pious Æneas appears to us, is a deer-stealer; nor is it much excuse for him, that the deer were wandering without keepers; for however he might, from this circumstance, have been unable to ascertain whose property they were; he might, I think, have been pretty well assured that they were not his.

Having thus acquitted our hero of misconduct, by the example of his betters, I proceed to what I think the master-stroke of the poet.

The Knave of Hearts
He stole those Tarts,
And—took them—quite away—!!

Here, whoever has an ear for harmony, and a heart for feeling, must be touched! there is a desponding melancholy in the run of the last line! an air of tender regret in the addition of 'quite away!' a something so expressive of irrecoverable loss! so forcibly intimating the '*Ah nunquam reditura!*' 'They never can return!' in short such a union of sound and sense, as we rarely, if ever meet with in any author, ancient or modern. Our feelings are all alive; but the poet, wisely dreading that our sympathy with the injured queen might alienate our affections from his hero, contrives immediately to awaken our fears for him, by telling us, that

The King of Hearts
Call'd for those Tarts.

We are all conscious of the fault of our hero, and all tremble with him, for the punishment which the enraged may inflict;

And beat the Knave full sore!

The fatal blow is struck! we cannot but rejoice that guilt is justly punished, though we sympathize with the guilty object of punishment. Here Scriblerus, who, by-the-bye, is very fond of making unnecessary alterations, proposes reading 'Score' instead of 'sore,' meaning thereby to particularize, that the beating bestowed by this monarch, consisted of twenty stripes. But this proceeds from his ignorance of the genius of our language, which does not admit of such an expression as 'full score,' but would require the insertion of the particle 'a,' which cannot be, on account of the metre. And this is another great artifice of the poet: by leaving the quantity of beating indeterminate, he gives every reader the liberty to administer it, in exact proportion to the sum of indignation which he may have conceived against his hero; that by thus amply satisfying their resentment, they may be the more easily reconciled to him afterward.

The King of Hearts
Call'd for those Tarts,
And beat the Knave full sore!

Here ends the second part, or middle of the poem; in which we see the character, and exploits of the hero, pourtrayed with the hand of a master.

Nothing now remains to be examined, but the third part, or end. In the end, it is a rule pretty well established, that the work should draw towards a conclusion, which our author manages thus,

The Knave of Hearts
Brought back those Tarts.

Here every thing is at length settled; the theft is compensated; the tarts restored to their right owner;

and poetical justice, in every respect, strictly, and impartially administered.

We may observe, that there is nothing in which our poet has better succeeded, than in keeping up an unremitted attention in his readers to the main instruments, the machinery of his poem, viz. the tarts; insomuch, that the aforementioned Scriblerus has sagely observed, that 'he can't tell, but he doesn't know, but the tarts may be reckoned the heroes of the poem.' Scriblerus, though a man of learning, and frequently right in his opinion, has here certainly hazarded a rash conjecture. His arguments are overthrown entirely by his great opponent, Hiccius, who concludes, by triumphantly asking, 'had the tarts been eaten, how could the poet have compensated for the loss of his heroes?'

We are now come to the *dénouement*, the setting all to rights: and our poet, in the management of his moral, is certainly superior to his great ancient predecessors. The moral of their fables, if any they have, is so interwoven with the main body of their work, that in endeavouring to unravel it, we should tear the whole. Our author has very properly preserved his, whole and entire for the end of his poem, where he completes his main design, the reformation of his hero, thus,

> And vow'd he'd steal no more.

Having in the course of his work, shewn the bad effects arising from theft, he evidently means this last moral reflection, to operate with his readers as a gentle and polite dissuasive from stealing.

> The Knave of Hearts
> Brought back those Tarts,
> And vow'd he'd steal no more!

Thus have I industriously gone through the several parts of this wonderful work; and clearly proved it, in every one of these parts, and in all of

them together, to be a due and proper Epic poem; and to have as good a right to that title, from its adherence to prescribed rules, as any of the celebrated masterpieces of antiquity. And here I cannot help again lamenting, that by not knowing the name of the author, I am unable to twine our laurels together, and to transmit to posterity the mingled praises of genius, and judgment; of the poet, and his commentator.

Having some space left in this paper, I will now, with the permission of my readers of the great world, address myself more particularly to my fellow-citizens.

To them, the essay which I have here presented, will, I flatter myself, be peculiarly serviceable at this time; and I would earnestly recommend an attentive perusal of it to all of them whose muses are engaged in compositions of the Epic kind. I am very much afraid that I may run into the error, which I have myself pointed out, of becoming too local, but where it is evidently intended for the good of my fellow-citizens, it may, I hope, be now and then pardonable. At the present juncture, as many have applied for my assistance, I cannot find in my heart to refuse it them. Were I to attempt fully explaining, why at the present juncture, I fear it would be in vain. Would it not seem incredible to the ladies, were I to tell them, that the period approaches, when upwards of a hundred Epic poems* will be exposed to public view, most of them nearly of equal length, and many of them nearly of equal merit, with the one of which I have here taken into consideration; illustrated moreover with elegant etchings, designed either as *hieroglyphical* explanations of the subject, or as *practical puns* on the name

* Bacchus; abolished in the succeeding year.

of the author? And yet in truth so it is, and on this subject I wish to give a word of advice to my countrymen.

Many of them have applied to me by letter, to assist them with designs for prefixing to their poems; and this I should very willingly have done, had those gentlemen been kind enough to subscribe their real names to their requests: whereas, all that I have received have been signed, *Tom Long*, *Philosophus*, *Philalethes*, and such-like. I have therefore been prevented from affording them the assistance I wished; and cannot help wondering, that the gentlemen did not consider, that it was impossible for me to provide typical references for feigned names; as, for aught I know, the person who signs himself *Tom Long* may be four feet high; *Philosophus* may be possessed of a considerable share of folly; and *Philalethes* may be as arrant a liar as any in the kingdom.

It may not however be useless to offer some general reflections for all who may require them. It is not improbable, that, as the subject of their poems is the Restoration, many of my fellow-citizens may choose to adorn their *title-pages* with the representation of his Majesty, Charles the Second, escaping the vigilance of his pursuers in the Royal Oak. There are some particularities generally observable in this picture, which I shall point out to them, lest they fall into similar errors. Though I am as far as any other Briton can be, from wishing to 'curtail' his Majesty's wig 'of its fair proportion,' yet I have sometimes been apt to think it rather improper, to make the wig, as is usually done, of larger dimensions than the tree in which it and his Majesty are concealed. It is a rule in logic, and I believe may hold good in most other sciences, that '*omne majus continet in se minus*,' that 'every thing larger can hold any thing that is less;' but I

own, I never heard the contrary advanced or defended with any plausible arguments, viz. ‘ that every thing little can hold one larger.’ I therefore humbly propose, that there should be at least an edge of foliage round the outskirts of the said wig; and that its curls should not exceed in number the leaves of the tree. There is also another practice almost equally prevalent, of which I am sceptic enough to doubt the propriety. I own, I cannot think it by any means conducive to the more effectual concealment of his Majesty, that there should be three Regal Crowns stuck on three different branches of the tree. Horace says indeed,

> Pictoribus atque Poetis,
> Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.
>
> Painters and poets our indulgence claim,
> Their daring equal, and their art the same.—FRANCIS.

And this may be reckoned a very allowable poetical licence, inasmuch as it lets the spectator into the secret, *who is in the tree.* But it is apt to make him at the same time throw the accusation of negligence and want of penetration on the three dragoons, who are usually depicted on the foreground, cantering along very composedly, with serene countenances, erect persons, and drawn swords, very little longer than themselves.—B.

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N° 13. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1787.

Quanto ferocius ante se egerint, tanto cupidius insolitas voluptates hausisse.—TAC.

Their appetite for unusual pleasure, was in proportion to their former ferocity.

THERE are many ideas, which, as I have hinted in a former paper, we are apt, merely on poetical authority, to adopt as data, and to substitute the pleasing, but extravagant exuberance of a luxuriant fancy, for the convincing solidity of historical demonstration. Among these, none perhaps recurs more frequently to our imagination, or strikes it more forcibly, than the primeval innocence of man. We inwardly reproach ourselves with degeneracy; and are chagrined, when, after having contemplated the beauties of so highly finished a picture, we cast our eyes on an imperfect sketch which suffers so much by the comparison.

A state of nature, however, when divested of its poetical ornaments, will be found to be by no means a state of innocence; and we shall perceive, upon a more accurate inspection, that civilization, far from being prejudicial to the virtues of mankind, is in reality that fine polish which displays his exalted endowments to advantage; and effects the grand distinction between brute and human nature. The soul of man is so intimately blended with his passions, that apathy is almost nonexistence; and even in the most sluggish and insensible, we discover some ruling appetite, some main spring, which seems to actuate the few ideas of his listless vacancy. To reduce these therefore from our tyrants to our assistants, and to convert to the purposes of

an agreeable variety, what was originally the cause of a flagitious sameness in our actions, is surely beneficial to the community. The vices of nature are concentrated, but violent; those of civilization diffuse, but gentle. According, therefore, to the established political maxim, *divide* and *conquer*, those of the latter being individually less powerful, are more easily subdued. To this it may be objected, that if the vices of the natural man are more violent, his virtues are at least of a superior nature; that obsequious insincerity is a bad substitute for disinterested honesty; and that where courage and friendship are exchanged for policy and civility, however it may advance the abilities of mankind, it argues that their hearts are proportionably corrupted.

Specious as the names of these virtues are, that boasted honesty while it extended its influence to the immediate circle in which it moved, narrowed the heart against a general intercourse with mankind, and precluded the idea of philanthrophic benevolence; on the contrary, a general attention to the duties of society, while like the sun it diffuses its light and heat, loses nothing of its central fire. Courage, when restricted by laws, is a desirable attribute; but when it becomes its own legislator, is too much the child of chance to be depended upon as the arbiter of the happiness or misery of mankind.

Civilized policy is by no means so infernal an agent to ambition as it has been generally represented. The time is at length arrived in the more enlightened parts of Europe, when the statesman has ceased to adopt the dagger and the bowl as necessary pieces of furniture in his cabinet; and in the present age, the school of Machiavel is not considered as the only road to greatness: so far has the refined spirit of the times contributed to humanize even the love of power.

Having thus endeavoured to prove, that a closer

union of the bonds of society is by no means derogatory to the dignity, or even prejudicial to the interests of mankind; my next endeavour shall be to investigate, what in all ages has been the most effectual method of reducing barbarous ferocity; of softening the vices of human nature into foibles; and of refining its good qualities into virtues. And no principle we may observe has been more conducive to these effects than the love of pleasure. We may exemplify this by the authority of the most consummate politicians; the revolutions of the most powerful empires; and the errors* of the most experienced commanders, the world ever produced. Cæsar, in accounting for the superior ferocity of the Germans to the Gauls, mentions, as the principal cause, the effeminacy which a frequent intercourse with merchants had introduced among the latter; but which, among the former, was hitherto but little known. Nay, so adapted to the support of this idea are the words of Tacitus in relating Agricola's method of reducing the savage independence of the Britons, that I will trespass on the reader's patience by transcribing them.

'Ut homines dispersi et rudes, eoque bello faciles, quieti et otio per voluptates assuescerent; hortari privatim, adjuvare publicè, ut templa, fora, domus exstruerent, laudando promptos, et castigando segnes. Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire. Inde etiam habitûs nostri honor, et frequens toga. Paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus, et balnea, et conviviorum elegantiam. Idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.'

'That this nation, dispersed and uncultivated, and

* This position may seem a little extraordinary, but as the opposite events tend chiefly to the aggrandizement of individuals, it is to subsequent effects we are to look for the advantageous or destructive tendency of these.

on that account, more prone to war, might by indulgences become more accustomed to ease and quiet, he began privately to encourage, and publicly to assist them in building temples, courts of judicature, and habitations; by commending the ready and chastising the idle; and at the same time, to instruct the sons of their chieftains in the liberal arts. From hence arose their respect for us, and their frequent assumption of the Roman habit; so that by degrees they were brought over to the allurements of luxury, porticos, and baths, and elegant entertainments; their ignorance giving the name of refinement, to what was in reality to conduce to their slavery.'

A convincing proof, that this politic measure was approved of by this great pattern of provincial government; a measure, which, when we reflect on its salutary consequences, naturally brings to our mind the opposite conduct of the first invaders of America, whose progress was marked with such carnage, merely, perhaps, from their ignorance or neglect of this founded principle.

To proceed however in illustrating what I have advanced, and to prove that the love of pleasure has often been instrumental to subverting the constitution of empires founded on military law, by lulling to sleep this ferocious insolence where it was a constituent part of the government, I need only recur to the well known instances of Sparta and Rome. The decline of the former may, with great reason be dated from the abrogation of those wise sumptuary laws instituted by the political penetration of Lycurgus. That celebrated legislator, from having long studied the genius of his countrymen, judged, that a military government was most peculiarly adapted to it; and that the very principle of refinement, which, from their innate pride supported the Athenians, would tend to enervate the haughty seve-

rity of the Spartans, and subvert that warlike disposition by which alone they existed as a commonwealth. The alteration produced in the manners, and shortly after in the government, of the latter, from similar causes (a period of about one hundred and thirty years having elapsed from the introduction of the Corinthian and Syracusan luxuries, to the perpetual dictatorship of Sylla), is too well known to need discussion here. Suffice it to say, that during this interval, and even after the subversion of the commonwealth, the great and elegant geniuses, who from the introduction of the liberal arts, were enabled to add cultivation to a rich and luxuriant soil, have so far obscured the rugged and unformed virtues of their predecessors, that though the mind may rest with a momentary satisfaction on a Cincinnatus or a Fabricius, it is to the refined voluptuousness of a Lucullus, the unbounded soul of a Cæsar, and the inexhausted genius of a Cicero, that we look for the character of this extraordinary people.

Lastly, to exemplify this idea in the defeats or dissolution of the most powerful and veteran armies, which have entirely originated in a deviation from the simple abstinence necessary to their unity, let us take a short review of the conduct of Hannibal, from his entrance into Italy, to the defection of Capua. This astonishing commander, having through the most barbarous countries in the midst of the united attacks of war, famine, and tempest, cemented the jarring interests of an army made up of the flower of some nations, and the scum of others; having personally surmounted the most incredible difficulties, and in all his enterprises united the characters of soldier and general; having gained four decisive victories over the Romans in the very heart of Italy; neither himself nor his army could resist the soft climate and luxurious effeminacy of Campania, 'Adeo ut verè dictum sit,' says Florus, 'Capuam

Hannibali Cannas fuisse.'—'So that it was with justice said, that Capua was Hannibal's Cannæ.' I might farther enforce this maxim, by Cæsar's description of the state of Pompey's camp, when he accounts for his victory in Thessaly; and afterward by the effect of Egyptian luxury on the veteran legions of Antony; were I not hastening to a period, with which, as I presume, some of my fellow-citizens are unwillingly familiar, I purpose concluding this winter's tale.

The sudden alteration in the genius of the English on the Restoration, an epocha which has now a double hold on immortal celebrity, from the assistance of history and poetry, has been to some a matter of surprise; and the immediate transition from the cold suspicious policy of Cromwell, and the fanatic hypocrisy of the commonwealth, to the general spirit of dissipation, and the sudden revival of sprightly wit, and genius in all its levity, which characterized the reign of Charles, has been considered as a striking instance of fickleness in the human understanding.

But it was probably this principle, so inherent in our natures, which gave rise to so general a variation. The mind of man, after having been harassed by the usurpation of the more violent passions, seizes with avidity the first object which offers itself, as a relaxation from care, and a gratification of the unsatisfied appetites. This was, at the accession of Charles, the state of England; at one time distracted by internal discord, at another enslaved by its pretended deliverer, it easily concurred with the more voluptuous disposition of its new master, in exchanging political, for poetical ribaldry; and converting the intrigues of the cabinet, into those of the chamber. In the one case, the angry collision of two thunder clouds, struck forth mutual flashes, whose progress was only known by the subsequent

destruction; in the other, the returning sun, doubly prolific after the storm, nurtured those flowers of wit and genius, which form no inconsiderable figure in the annals of English literature.

The same effects from the same causes may be observed to have taken place in the latter years of William's reign, and more particularly during that of Queen Anne (deservedly esteemed the Augustan age of Great Britain); and from that period, though perhaps the same day has not seen the united excellences of so many distinguished men, our visible refinements on luxury will be sufficient evidence of our progress in civilization. Innumerable are the conveniences, nay, superfluities of life in this opulent kingdom, which in the beginning of this century were totally unknown; and which, though they may feed cynical spleen, or offend the severity of a stoic, if they tend to add one more link to the chain of society, to awaken one more liberal emotion in the heart, or to humanize, into a citizen of the world one more malcontent (as from their tendency we have evident reason to suppose they do), the temporal evil is by no means equivalent to the lasting good; and the man who advances civilization to its highest polish, is the most beneficial member of the community.—C.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

I cannot comply with the request of NUMA, as it would be highly presumptuous in me to engage in any religious controversy. ALFRED shall be attended to, but may depend upon proper inquiry being made at the Heralds' Office, with regard to the performance of his promise.—CHRISTOPHER CUTJOKE shall appear.

N° 14. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1787.

Locus est et pluribus umbris.—HORACE.
Still I have room.—FRANCIS.

ACCORDING to my promise made in a former paper, I shall dedicate this to the favours of correspondents. They will see that I have been careful to abridge nothing, but what was necessary to reduce their letters to a more convenient size.

To the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN.

'SIR,

'An ingenious paper of yours, containing some acute and just observations on epitaphs, induced me to offer for your inspection the following remarks on that subject.

'We need no other witness than our own conscience, to convict us of that inordinate love of fame, so predominant in all orders and ranks of men. If then in the prime of life, this passion prevails over every other consideration, and outbalances all objections thrown into the opposite scale by virtue or religion; if those moralists are to be credited, who contend, not without some shadow of reason, that the passions operate on the human mind in a greater degree, as we draw nearer to our end; thus, above all others, must consequently have greater influence at that awful period; since its sole aim is to be the topic of praise and admiration to its own and succeeding generations. Why do the "short and simple annals of the poor," in the country churchyard, court the tribute of a tear from the sympathetic traveller? Why do we behold with wonder and astonishment, the monumental records of the rich and noble in that vast pile of antiquity, where

the princes and prelates, the heroes and poets of this land, lie mouldering together? For the same reason; that desire of being distinguished, even after death, from the common herd of mortals, formed of the same perishable materials as ourselves. The unlettered rustic exults as much in his ill-shaped rhymes, which afford matter of conversation to the humble tenants of his native hamlet, as the trophied general in the superb folly of a stupendous mausoleum; both feel a proportionable degree of happiness, if they die with the hopes that their name shall escape the canker-worm of oblivion.

'In the gradual rise therefore and progress of different states, we may observe with what judgment the legislators selected this passion, as the hinge on which many of their principal laws seem to turn; no incentive to virtue was found so efficacious, as inscribing the actions of the dead on their monuments: thus inciting future heroes to similar exertions, by holding up to their eyes the laurels of their ancestors.

'The Lacedemonians indeed thoroughly understood the force and policy of this last tribute to the memory of the dead, and enacted a law, prohibiting all in their realm from making epitaphs on any persons except those who had surrendered up their lives for the service of their country: and in what did the bulwark and glory of Sparta consist? In military valour! which she endeavoured to strengthen by a reward the most endearing and grateful to the soul of man; a certainty that his fame should survive the frailty of human nature.

'When therefore we reflect on their utility, we cannot but lament the paucity of good epitaphs; though it is indeed a kind of writing so generally cultivated in all nations, that certainly there must be some in every country which redound as well to the honour of the author, as to the glory of those whom they immortalize. I wave mentioning many in our own language, which, though excellent, are obvious

to every one; but cannot help claiming your attention to one not so generally known, and at the same time remarkable for its elegance and simplicity. Drayton was a poet, who lived in the sixteenth century.

Doe, pious marble, let thy readers know,
What they and what their children owe
To Drayton's name, whose sacred dust
Wee recommend unto thy trust;
Protect his memory and preserve his storye,
Remain a lasting monument of his glorye,
And when thy ruines shall disclame
To be the treas'rer of his name,
His name, which cannot fade, shall be
An everlasting monument to thee.

'How different are the epitaph-writers of these days, when every tomb-stone bears the strongest contradiction to truth and reason. To be assured of this, only take a survey of the burial places within the bills of mortality, and at the same time a retrospect of the lives of those, whose bones are adorned with this miserable and faithless descant on their virtues; and you will find every day some fresh proof, how frequently

Some kind friend supplies,
Hic jacet, and a hundred lies.

'The notoriety indeed of their misuse is so flagrant among the French, that "*Menteur comme un epitaph*," passes for a proverb with them. But not to detain you any longer on this subject, I shall present you with the following, as a specimen of honesty and integrity in an epitaph rarely to be found. It is written on an amphibious animal, vulgarly called a marine; and I suspect it to be the production of some true-hearted tar, both from the originality and peculiar bluntness of the composition; but I leave that to the decision of the learned.

Here lies retired from busy scenes,
A first Lieutenant of Marines,

Who lately lived in health and plenty,
On board the good ship Diligentè,
Now stripp'd of all his warlike show,
And laid in box of elm below,
Confin'd to earth in narrow borders,
He rises not till farther orders.

'But to return to my subject, and to apply it more particularly to those for whom it was intended, will prove on trial a more difficult and important matter, than at first it appeared to be. For there are certain followers of Democritus, who maintain, that every thing serious is ridiculous. Paradoxical as this doctrine seems, there are not wanting those, even in our lesser world, who laugh reflection out of countenance, merely because it comes not within the sphere of their comprehension. But I shall consider myself as addressing those who are unhackneyed in the ways of this sect; the lovers of contemplation, and you, who have exhibited by your weekly Lucubrations a fondness and attachment to literature, highly meritorious, and leave them to enjoy their laugh, though at my expense.

'Are the young and inexperienced to admire an epitaph on a distinguished and noble character, for the elegance and perspicuity of the style; for the harmony of the periods alone? does the entombed glory of Chatham suggest to the contemplative mind no other ideas than those, which are fleet and transient as the morning dew before the sun? No, "E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries," while we contemplate with regret the loss of a great and noble hero, "go and do thou likewise."

CÆMETERIUS.'

I cannot better comply with the request of the young lady to whom I am indebted for the following letter, than by publishing her case in her own words.

'To Gregory Griffin, Esq.

'DEAR SIR,

'You, who are scarcely entered into life, yet know so well how to judge of its proprieties, will take up with spirit, I flatter myself, the subject which I propose recommending to your observation. And as you are in a great measure the guardian of a world, whose inhabitants will one day largely contribute to fill up the various circles of higher life, any hints from a pen so peculiarly interesting as yours, must deeply impress their minds with the conviction of those truths you wish to inculcate.

'My case will perhaps seem at first sight unworthy of serious consideration; but it has been very truly observed, by many very wise men, that there are trivial mortifications, which, being considered by the world as too insignificant for their pity, are, more particularly perhaps on that account, equally painful to the sufferer with the most serious misfortunes.

'The circumstances which I at present allude to, are the loud whispers, the half-suppressed fits of laughter, and those other nameless rudenesses, which are not so pointed as to bring a Jemmy Fellow into danger of a serious reprimand; but are generally too well understood by the victim of their raillery, and are very long and severely felt.—Perhaps I shall better elucidate my meaning by a candid recital of the particular affair which induced me to write to you, of which you will make what use you please; and grant generous allowances to the first female correspondent who claims your countenance and support.

'I have been educated very far from the gay and fashionable world; and my heart now palpitates at the recollection of what I felt, when on the morning of my eighteenth year my father offered me a journey to London. I accepted it with transport,

and I have actually been in town now a whole fortnight. It would be dull and uninteresting to give you an account of all the raptures I have felt at the variety of scenes, which have the powerful charm of novelty, added to all that is pleasing, to recommend them.

'An invitation to a ball awaited my arrival; and great was the metamorphosis made in my appearance, to qualify me for the very best company. After a last look of approbation at my glass, I had scarcely courage to encounter my father's eye with a sight so new to him. I hesitated as I entered the room; he surveyed me with a look of mingled affection and surprise; my huge muff fell from my hand, and appeared to me at that moment more formidable than the animal could have done to whom it originally belonged. By an approving smile, however, from my father, the muff was reinstated in my favour; the whim of my cap was changed into taste; the feathers droop more gracefully than ever; and I adjusted my handkerchief in perfect good humour with its enlarged and extended size.—Thus self-complacent, my mind was left at ease to dwell upon the delightful expectations I had formed from the ball. My watch surely beat more tedious hours than when I was in the country. The moment however at last arrived. I entered the room full of a thousand pleasing chimeras; and as I felt a warm animated glow of partiality for every body I saw, I never once conceived but they all felt a reciprocal lively prepossession in my favour.

'While the lady of the house was introducing me to the circle of her friends, and my heart was exulting with joy not to be described, a smart well-dressed beau tripped up to a lady near me, and significantly repeated, in a loud whisper,

> So stiff, so mute, some statue you would swear,
> Stepp'd from its pedestal to take the air.

'I turned suddenly round and caught his eye, a titter followed, and in one moment I was humbled to the dust. Judge of my sensations; confused, mortified, and all my hopes of pleasing flown. In vain I endeavoured to recover my cheerfulness; my partner was pleasing and attentive: but the frightful figure, who had thus put me out of humour with myself, came so often near me in the dance, and his odious rhyme so jingled in my ears, that it was to no purpose I reasoned against those feelings, which the consciousness of guilt itself could hardly have increased.

'Pray tell me, my dear Sir, where do people derive the right to trifle with the ease and comfort of others? The advantages of fortune and education, which this gentleman, I find, may boast of, were no advantages to me. They might have been extremely pleasing, had they induced him to behave with common propriety to a person (said to be handsome), certainly young, and a stranger, and who could not therefore possibly have offended him.

'As good breeding is founded on good sense, and clearly meant to prevent uneasy feelings, should there not be some badge worn by those gentlemen who defy laws it is so much to the interest of society to revere, that we may know how to escape their insults? I will not say that a highwayman would frighten me less with a pistol pointed at my breast; but I am certain I could forgive him sooner. The one is an open attack, from which, if you can, you may defend yourself; in the other case there is no temptation, but from the hope of giving pain, and witnessing the cruel effects of it—a pleasure which I do not recollect that Milton has ascribed to his fallen angels.

'Let me hope then, that you, Sir, will bestow some salutary admonitions on persons of this description; and will take the trouble to inform them,

that the behaviour, of which I complain, is utterly unworthy of a gentleman; of a man of honour, courage, and benevolence.

I am, dear Sir, with the greatest respect,
Your humble servant, a mortified,
COUNTRY GIRL.'

That I may as much as possible fulfil the desire of my fair correspondent, I shall subjoin, for the information and edification of all whom it may concern of the great and little world, the following resolutions, passed in a COMMITTEE appointed for the purpose of investigating all manners, customs, and behaviour, of *children*, of what kind or denomination soever.

GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq. in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously,

I. That the being able to say by heart two or more lines of Pope, or any other poet or author whatsoever, does not constitute a pretty fellow, wit, or satirist.

II. That it is the opinion of this Committee, that wilfully and maliciously to insult the feelings of an inoffensive and unprotected female, is, in the extreme, mean, cowardly, and ungenerous.

MR. GRIFFIN then leaving the Chair,

It was resolved,

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his active, candid, and impartial conduct.

MR. GRIFFIN then resumed the Chair,

And it was Resolved,

I. That this Committee do continue to sit on every business, complaint, or application, of what

kind soever that is laid before the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN; and strictly and impartially do examine, investigate, and determine, on the same.

II. That the Resolutions of this COMMITTEE be printed in the Microcosm.

Signed by the Chairman,
GREGORY GRIFFIN, Chairman.

N° 15. MONDAY, MARCH 5, 1787.

Discordia semina rerum.—OVID.
Discordant matter.

THE first of the following letters I insert, as well on account of its intrinsic merit, as because it contains a request, with which I think it my duty to comply; and its own appearance will be not a little serviceable towards promoting the wish of its author. The second claims my attention, as it practically illustrates, in a manner very striking, a proposition I have before laid down, namely, the ill effects arising from intemperate joking.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR, London, February, 1787.

'As the motive which has induced you to undertake your justly-admired work, seems chiefly the good of your fellow-citizens; and as the plan upon which you profess to conduct it, is so truly liberal, I am assured that a hint from whatever quarter, will not fail to meet with a favourable reception. Your illustrious predecessors, the Spectator, Rambler, &c. &c. were so famous for their candid and disinterested conduct in this particular, that they

were not afraid of displaying the faults which their correspondents pointed out; a circumstance which (with the wise and discerning) must have contributed not a little to advance their reputation. But it is not faults, Sir, upon which I would descant; I declare to you at present I have not perceived any which are material; and I am not one of those cavilling critics who are eager to

> Catch the straws which swim at top,
> And leave the pearls behind.

'My present intention is merely to take the liberty of pointing out to you a subject which I should be happy to see discussed in one of your papers; a subject which I think as likely to be beneficial to your contemporaries in their future progress through life, as most which could be proposed. It is, Sir, to point out to them, the very essential difference which subsists between true and false greatness.

'There are some of them whose unhappy propensity to indolence and futility you have humorously described; but there are doubtless others, who have a laudable ambition to distinguish themselves, and who (to make them valuable as well as conspicuous members of society) want only some friendly hand to point out the proper goal to which their race should be directed.

'Of all the powers of the human mind, the judgment seems to be that which arrives the latest at perfection: the reason is obvious; to compare and decide, requires a degree of calmness and perspicuity, almost incompatible with the fire and enthusiasm of youth.

'Without some assistance, therefore, my good Sir, how are they likely to discriminate between what is really, or only apparently great; will not the glare of the one be preferred to the steady brightness of the other? will not partial excellence delude their

imagination? and when the admirable and the estimable come in competition, will they not be apt to seize the former with eagerness, and reject the latter with contempt?

'The cold cautions of age and experience delivered upon these occasions, are generally derided, or at best heard with indifference; but this cannot be the case, Sir, when they come from you. Your fellow-citizens will surely listen with attention to one, who has reflected so much honour upon their society; and will receive with confidence the precepts of one, who convinces them by his conduct that he not only knows, but practises, what is truly meritorious.

'Hasten then, my good Sir, to instruct them in what real greatness consists. Should you succeed, the rising generation will have cause to bless you! the name of the MICROCOSMOPOLITAN will be mentioned with admiration and reverence to all futurity; and as for myself, I protest to you, my family crest shall be immediately erased, and a Griffin substituted in its room.

I am, Sir, with the truest respect,
Your constant friend and admirer,
ALFRED.'

'SIR,

'As the poor wretch who is about to suffer the ast penalty of the law, points out to his fellow-creatures the errors which have caused his ruin, and at the same time pathetically warns them by his unhappy fate; so I, with like conviction of misconduct, am solicitous to represent to the world my own inadvertencies; and by my example to caution others against committing faults similar to those which have proved my ruin.

'You must know, Mr. Griffin, that in my younger days I was exceedingly ambitious of being distin-

guished as a jester. There was no other consideration with me in life but what I would willingly sacrifice to this. When at Eton, I was remarked for being much better acquainted with Joe Miller and Tom Brown, than any of the Greek or Roman classics. My profession was the law, but I could not endure its drudgery; and therefore, instead of sapping at the statutes at large in my chambers, or sporting Cicero at the bar, I employed my time in scribbling bon-mots for the newspapers, and frequenting the society of young fellows of wit and pleasure. The clubs, of which I was a member, declared me a phenomenon of wit. I was pleased with this distinction; and knowing that my company in general consisted of men who had little to boast of but their facetiousness, I frequently paid for them their tavern reckonings, that I might enjoy the liveliness of their conversation; and purchased my participation of their festivity, at a price little suitable to the contracted state of my finances.

'I had once the happiness of possessing a very valuable friend. He was an exceedingly honest man, firmly attached to me, and capable, as well as willing, to do me many services; but unfortunately, he was not remarkable for any great quality of penetration; and besides this, he had a natural imperfection in his speech. Happening one day to be reckoning up with him a list of famous orators, and humorously putting his name among the number, he fell into a violent rage, insisted that I insulted him, and pulled me by the nose. I, pitying his want of sagacity in not discovering that all I intended was a joke, and at the same time reflecting that fighting was no part of the business of a man of wit, very calmly pocketed the affront, and left him. Thus terminated our intercourse of friendship.

'Some years ago I paid my addresses to a young lady, celebrated for her great beauty, fortune, and

mental endowments. I had every reason to felicitate myself on the prospect of being happily united to her; till chancing one evening to cut a joke on the seventh commandment, in the presence of herself and father, I was immediately frowned at by the lady, rebuked by the old gentleman, and soon after forbid the presence of the one, and the dwelling of the other.

'In the early part of my life, I was regarded by an old rich uncle of mine, who had a pretty young housekeeper, as his heir. But as my evil stars would have it, being once on a visit to him, and unthinkingly telling him a story of a ridiculous old dotard, and a brisk young damsel, he took the application to himself, called me an impertinent fellow, and discarded me.

'Many other misfortunes, Mr. Griffin, have attended this unlucky disposition of mine. They have had indeed, at last, this good effect on me; they have brought me to my senses; and I begin to see, that had I possessed only wit enough to discover that I was a fool, I should have acted very differently in these cases, and have been now a happy man.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

CHRISTOPHER CUTJOKE.'

For the insertion of the following letter I shall make no apology, but its own merit, and leave it to speak for itself.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'DEAR SIR,

'As the professed intention of your admirable work, is to treat of the foibles and follies of mankind in general, and our little world in particular, I presume, that (however other pursuits may have induced you to depart from your original plan) the

following unfinished lines, on a subject which you have not yet taken in hand, will not be totally unacceptable.

'I shall omit troubling you with the hackneyed apology of "an unfledged muse," however *apropos* it may be to the present case. This however I may be allowed to say, that they were written carelessly and in a hurry; and may possibly stand in need of much correction and defalcation. If however on any future occasion they shall be deemed worthy of a place in your paper, it will be the highest honour that can be aspired to, by

Your constant reader and admirer,

IRONICULUS.'

ARS MENTIENDI;

OR,

THE ART OF LYING.

When sordid man by justice unrestrain'd
Rang'd the wild woods, and food by plunder gain'd;
Yet unenlighten'd by mild reason's ray
Coarse nature rul'd with undisputed sway.
But when some sage's great aspiring mind,
By bonds of mutual interest link'd mankind,
Then art restrain'd her sister's wide domain,
And claim'd with nature a divided reign.
Yet still distrustful of her own success,
She sought to please by wearing nature's dress.

So *that* great art, whose principles and use,
Employ the pen of my unworthy muse,
Though great itself, in these degenerate days
Is forced to shine with adscititious rays,
Nor ever can a lasting sceptre wield,
Unless in robes of purest truth conceal'd.

Hear then whoe'er the arduous task will try,
Who wish with sense, with skill, with taste, to *lie*;
Ye patriots, plotting ministers' disgrace,
Ye ministers, who fear——a loss of place;
Ye tradesmen, who with writs the fop entrap,
Ye fops, who strive those tradesmen to escape;

Ye rev'rend Jews, enrich'd by Christian spoil,
Ye parsons, who for benefices toil:
No longer hope by open war to win,
Cease, cease, ye fools, to lie 'through thick and thin.'
But know this truth, enough for rogues to know,
Lies ne'er can please the man who thinks them so.

Would you by flatt'ry seek the road to wealth?
Push not too hard, but slide it in by stealth.
Mark well your cully's temper and pursuit,
And fit to every leg the pliant boot.
Tell not the spendthrift that he hoards with sense,
Tell not the miser that he scorns expense;
Nor praise the learning of a dunce profest,
Nor swear a sloven's elegantly dress'd.
Thus, if by chance, in harmless sport and play,
You coolly talk a character away;
Or boldly a flat perjurer appear,
Nor gallows dread, nor lacerated ear;
Still let your lies to truth *near neighbours* be,
And still with probability agree.
So shall you govern with unbounded reign,
Nor longer cringe, and toil, and *lie*, in vain;
While truth laments her empire quite o'erthrown,
And by a form usurp'd so like her *own*.

N° 16. MONDAY, MARCH 5, 1787.

Usus
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.

Use is the judge, the law, and rule, of speech.

It is a favourite amusement with me, and one of which in the present paper I shall invite my readers to participate, to adopt a maxim established in any single instance; to trace its influence where it has operated undiscovered; to examine the secret springs by which it has worked; and the causes which have contributed to their concealment. In the course of this pursuit, I may boast, that there is

scarce one of these miniatures of experience and observation, from the moral maxims of Grecian philosophy, to the prudential apophthegms of Poor Robin, which has not been successively the object of my observation and discussion. I am however aware, that in the opinion of their importance, I may perhaps be singular.

That 'life is short,' that the generality of 'mankind are vicious,' seem ideas that might have suggested themselves to a mind undistinguished for peculiar sagacity, or an uncommon share of experience.—But to carry farther the former of these maxims, and to consider that life is short, when compared with the multiplicity of its business and the variety of its pursuits; that it is too much so for the purposes of honour and ambition; that to draw a conclusion from the attempts of men, we should imagine it longer, is an observation not so entirely unworthy of a philosopher. And by pursuing the latter of these thoughts, though on the first view it may not appear the result of any extraordinary observation, it may be found on a narrower inspection, to convey a strong argument of the impropriety of popular government. The scrap of Latin, which, in conformity to established precedent, is prefixed to my paper, exhibits an example of the influence of fashion beyond those limits, which are usually assigned to its prerogative. For were we to accept the definition of it, the most usually accepted, we should consider it only as the director of diversion and dress; of unmeaning compliment, and unsocial intimacy. And however evidently mistaken such an opinion might appear, we must look for its source in one of the most prevailing principles of the human mind; a principle (the excess of which we stigmatize by the name of pedantry) of deducing the illustrations of every subject of inquiry from the more immediate objects of our own pursuits, and circum-

scribing its bounds within the limits of our own observation. On the contrary, we shall find, that all our attempts to prescribe bounds to the activity of this so powerful agent, will end only in surprise at the extent of its authority; in astonishment at the universality of its influence. Its claim to an undisputed empire over language, is asserted by the author from whom I have taken the motto of this paper; with what justice, the testimony of a succeeding age may declare; when a Cæsar, who made and unmade the laws of the world at his pleasure, found the smallest innovation in language beyond the utmost limits of arbitrary power. Nothing indeed but the highest vanity, nourished by the grossest adulation, an idea of the infinitude of sovereign authority, and servile obedience, could have given birth to such an attempt.

However paradoxical it may seem, that, in a matter of judgment and taste, the vague arbitration of individuals should be preferable to the absolute decision of a learned body; yet the imbecility so evident in the language of a neighbouring nation, and so undoubtedly the effect of establishing such a court of criticism, leaves us little reason to regret, that language with us, is so entirely the child of chance and custom.—The first prize of rhetoric given to a woman, was a bad omen to the future endeavours of the French academy.

To omit the innumerable inconveniences attending on every attempt to regulate language; to judge of the possible success of such an attempt, from the abstracted probability alone, were to declare it impossible. A multitude of circumstances, equally unforeseen and unavoidable, must concur to the formation of a language. An improvement, or corruption of manners; the reduction of a foreign enemy; or an invasion from abroad, are circumstances that ultimately, or immediately, tend to produce some change in the language of a people And

even of these, the most feeble agents have been found more efficacious, than the joint operations of power and policy.

The conquests of this nation on the continent, contributed more perhaps to the naturalization of the French language amongst us, than the Norman invasion, and its attendant consequences; the necessity laid on every individual, to acquire the use of that tongue in which all cases of property were to be determined; and the numberless disadvantages and restrictions imposed on the study of the native language.

At a time when measures so seemingly decisive proved ineffectual, it may be curious to observe the agency of others, apparently foreign from any connexion with the improvement or alteration of our language. The residence of our nobility in the conquered provinces of France, the continual wars maintained against that nation, making the study of their language an indispensable qualification in all who aspired to civil or military dignities, unavoidably brought on a change in our own. The accusation therefore, of a learned etymologist, against Chaucer, of introducing into our language '*integra verborum plaustra*,' 'whole cart-loads of words,' however elegant in expression, is false in foundation. The language of Chaucer's poetry, is that of the court in which he lived; and that it was not, no probable conclusion can be drawn, from any difference of style of authors, his contemporaries. In those who writ under the same advantages, no such difference is observable; and those, who were excluded from them, laboured under extreme disadvantages, from the variations of vernacular language, and the diversity of provincial dialect; which, as they have now in a great measure ceased to exist, may, together with their primary causes, furnish a subject for curious inquiry.

It appears, from the concurrence of several inge-

nious antiquaries, as well as from the testimony of Caxton, in one of his prefaces, that the English language was, in his time, diversified by innumerable provincial peculiarities. He mentions his own choice of the Kentish dialect, and the success that attended it. The language of Chaucer's poetry is frequently more intelligible to a modern reader, than that of such of his successors, as employed themselves on popular subjects. Gawin Douglas, a poetical translator of Virgil, is now, owing to the use of a Northern dialect, though a near contemporary of Spenser's, almost unintelligible.

After establishing the existence of a fact, the beaten track of transition will naturally lead us to a consideration of its causes. Among the first effects produced by an extension of empire, may be reckoned a barbarous peculiarity of language, in the provinces the most remote from the seat of learning and refinement. Livy is said to have had his Patavinity; and Claudian is accused of barbarisms, the consequence of his education in a distant province. A difficulty of conveyance, a stagnation of commercial intercourse, will produce the same effects with too wide an extension of empire; and are as an effectual a barrier against a mixture of idioms and dialect, as in a more civilized state, the utmost distance of situation between the most remote provinces.

To causes seemingly so unconnected with the situation of language, must we attribute the barbarity of our own during so many centuries. And those which contributed to its refinement, may, at first sight, probably, seem equally foreign to that effect. No nation, perhaps, contributed less to the revival of literature, than our own; a circumstance which in a great measure secured it from that torrent of pedantry which overwhelmed the rest of Europe. The ignorance of our ancestors kept them unac-

quainted with the ancients; except through the medium of a French translation. The first labours of the English press brought to light the productions of English literature; which, how rude and barbarous soever, were not confined to the intelligence of the scholar, or the libraries of the learned; but dispersed throughout the nation, and open to the inspection of all, disseminated a general taste for literature, and gave a slow, gradual polish to our language:—while in every other nation of Europe, the conceits of commentators, and writers of a similar stamp, whose highest ambition it was to add a Latin termination to a high Dutch name, came into the world, covered with ill-sorted shreds of Cicero and Virgil; like the evil spirits, which have been said to animate a cast-off carcass, previous to their ascension to the regions of light.

N° 17. MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1787.

Diversa Sequentes.—HORACE.

Various their subjects.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR,

'I HAVE thrown together a few observations on the true purpose and extent of politeness, a subject not altogether uninteresting; as it is in the proper or improper application of this, that we are to look for the real elegancies and heightenings of polished life; or the false and empty professions of hypocrisy. And first, it may not be amiss to obseive, that though it can by no means be deemed in itself a

sufficient substitute for real merit, yet it never fails to give it a polish wherever it meets with it. By softening down the more prominent features, and as it were malleating the harder and more unyielding parts of the composition, it renders the object at once amiable and respectable. We may call it the handmaid of benevolence, busied at the same time in adding to the native charms of her mistress, and performing farther such little offices, as seem not to come immediately within her own department. Not contented, however, with this station, she has usurped a higher character, and like the shade of departed sincerity, increases on us, and swells on the eye with that extraordinary expansion, which we are told the spiritual nature is capable of.

'She addresses us in borrowed phrase, and with complacent smiles, and seemingly honest welcome, beckons us to the hollow embraces of a visionary impostor. Nor is such an impostor to be despised as a weak or an impotent enemy. Like other counterfeits, she becomes the immediate tool of the worldly-minded, who find her a ready instrument for the execution of their mercenary views; and even the best are found upon some occasions to prostitute her to the most unworthy purposes. Let me not, however, from this be deemed an enemy to polished manners. As far as the adjusting ceremonials which fashion has prescribed, and which cannot but be innocent, because we seem in this case to enter into a sort of tacit compact of mutual deceit; still let them be the passport of a gentleman, and stamp of civilization.

'But here let politeness stop; let her not assume the form and accent of philanthropy; let her not smile upon her follower, then turn from him "with hard unkindness' altered eye." In this we trace a blacker motive; it is not the effect of a disposition curious in the observance of the minuter parts of

ceremonial, but the deliberate cruelty of a reflecting mind.

'Many indeed are the ill consequences arising from the misapplication of politeness; in one it introduces an effeminacy and unmanliness of character; another accustoming himself to varnish over things in their nature ambiguous, insensibly finds his perceptions of right and wrong become less clear and distinct; the invariable lines of truth and reason are confounded; and the moral sense itself becomes languid and inactive. It is true, that all who offend thus, err not from the same motive; and it is not unfrequently from an affectation of rising higher than the highest, and of making improvements in an art already as perfect as it ought to be, that this has so far exceeded its natural limits: if so, it may not be amiss to observe, that as in all other languages, so in the courteous vocabulary, there is a period, after which all innovation becomes barbarous; and as in the former case the author who could add nothing to his original stock of materials, may, however, by a judicious arrangement give them all the graces of elocution; so may our Chesterfield graduate display to us the fine gentleman with all its heightenings, without exceeding the limits which both fashion has prescribed, and worldly sincerity may allow of.

I am Sir, yours, &c. ——————.'

'To Gregory Griffin, Esq.

'DEAR SIR,

'As you have in a foregoing paper so generously promised to attend impartially to every complaint which shall be submitted to your cognizance, I think no one can lay a juster claim to your attention, and even compassion, than myself. My whole life has been one continued series of misfortunes.

'I will not enter into a detail of my pedigree, as

that is both immaterial and uninteresting; suffice it to say, I am the only son of a clergyman; who being disgusted with some slights he had received in the world, retired to a small living in the north of England; with the determination of devoting his whole time to the care of my education, which he was in every respect calculated to superintend. At the age of eighteen I had the good fortune to obtain a scholarship at the university, and then the good old man, as if he had completed all his worldly affairs, resigned himself into the hands of his Maker; leaving me no other inheritance than his benediction. As I had been strictly educated in the principles of honour and religion, I could not, I confess, behold the vice and folly of my fellow-students, without endeavouring to point out to them the impropriety and depravity of their conduct; for my good-nature however I was ridiculed; for my strict adherence to virtue I obtained the appellation of a *Prig;* and in short was universally laughed at and insulted.

'For the space of twenty years I led this life of misery; 'till at length urged on by the perpetual indignities I received, and quite weary of a college life, I gladly accepted the offer of a gentleman to become tutor to his sons; and thus gave up my wretched liberty for a still more wretched dependance. I flattered myself, indeed, that I had bettered my situation; but alas! into what an error had I fallen! I soon perceived, that Mr. B. was a professed libertine, and his lady a female rake. I consoled myself, however, with the thoughts of passing my time agreeably in the care of my young pupils: but here I was again mistaken. They were four in number, all alike ungovernable, uncontrollable. I strove at first to gain their affections by lenity and mildness; but I strove in vain. I then began to enforce harsher methods, and even to inflict chastisement; but I was soon given to understand, that

Mr. B. did not permit *his* sons to be used like *common* boys. Thus, Sir, I lost all authority over my pupils; who now offer me every insult and indignity that their malice or revenge can suggest; and take every opportunity of shewing their contempt and superiority over me. All this, Sir, I could bear; as I am conscious of my own uprightness and integrity; but there is another circumstance which raises my indignation to the highest pitch. Mr. B. sometimes compels me to be present at his excesses; alleging with a sneer, that his chaplain certainly is the properest man to say grace at his table. There, Sir, I am not only a spectator of the most infamous and indecent behaviour, but am frequently compelled to hear even the most daring and impious blasphemies; which raise at the same time my horror and indignation. This, Mr. Griffin, is what I cannot bear, and am determined to quit this house immediately; if, therefore, you should be able to procure me any place, agreeable to my profession, as no doubt your interest in both worlds is great, you will confer a real favour on,

Your sincere admirer, ARTHUR CASSOCK.'

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR,

'If the sincerity of the following verses can recommend them to your notice, and the tediousness of them be not foreign to your plan, I shall be much pleased to see them in a paper of the MICROCOSM.

Yours, Sir, ETONENSIS.'

Ask ye, companions of my infant years,
Why rise my sighs, why flow my frequent tears?
Ah! know, e'er Cynthia shall her orb complete,
I leave, unhappy youth, fair learning's seat:
I leave, dear Eton, thy maternal arms,
These hallow'd walls, the muses' much-lov'd charms,

To brave the storms, ah! many a storm I ween,
That hover round life's sad and gloomy scene.
But ere I go, accept these artless lays,
That flow sincere, nor ask a poet's praise;
If they my boundless gratitude will speak,
No more I ask, no greater meed I seek.
Sadly I go—the truth my tears will tell—
Sadly, dear Eton, take a long farewell;
For dawning reason warns, that leaving you,
To peace, to innocence, I bid adieu:
Yes, it is true, whate'er the world may say,
Within your walls the moral virtues play;
Infuse their power in ev'ry pupil's breast,
And give the features health, the conscience, rest.
Oh! if thy precepts would for ever live,
Stampt on my breast, and their chaste influence give;
Still should I virtue's warning voice revere,
Nor lend to Syren's song a wanton ear.
Amid the frantic mirth, the senseless noise,
Which headstrong youth too oft mistake for joys;
My inmost thoughts I still would turn to thee,
Call on thy name, and boast my reason free.
Accept then, Eton, this my grateful pray'r,
Long may'st thou flourish Phœbus' fav'rite care;
Long may'st thou rear on high, the antique tow'r,
Secure from greedy time's malicious pow'r.
And thou, fair Thames, who view'st with conscious pride,
The jocund sports that skirt thy sedgy side,
Farewell! no more shall I thy banks along,
Sooth'd by soft murmurs, pen my uncouth song;
No more by warm ideas wrapt, shall dream,
Of gay poetic ground and sacred stream.
To you, ye much lov'd trees, beneath whose shade,
Through classic walks, in musing mood I stray'd,
I bid farewell, 'tis tyrant time commands,
To seek new walks, and fields, in other lands;
To other lands I go; no more shall meet
The well-known face, no more the friend shall greet:
Yes, dear companions, I shall find but few,
On life's great stage, such candid friends as you.
I go, compell'd your friendship to forsake;—
But O! whatever parts in life you take,
O! in his part may each successful prove,
And crown the wish of my fraternal love.
But what return, what due return can song,
Song weak as mine, give them to whom belong
The little gleanings of my classic lore,
And all my knowledge (were that knowledge more)

Yet I will thank you, nor the thanks refuse,
Ye kind *Instructors* of my lisping muse.
Accept the wishes of a grateful heart,
That feels far more than language can impart.
Whenever good shall mark my humble way,
To you the merit and the thanks I'll pay;
Where'er I go, your mem'ries shall be dear,
I'll love your lessons, and your names revere.
From pleasure's paths unwillingly I stray,
The summer past, then comes a winter's day;
Sadly I go—the truth my tears will tell—
Sadly, dear Eton, take a long farewell.

N° 18. MONDAY, MARCH 12, 1787.

Fruitur famâ sui.—TACITUS.

He becomes a witness of the opinions which others entertain of him.

'MERCURY,' says the fabulist, 'wishing to know in what estimation he was held by mankind, put off the insignia of divinity, and assuming the air and appearance of a mere mortal, entered into the shop of a statuary. Having purchased at a considerable price, a Jupiter, a Juno, a Fury or two, and some other nick-nacks of the same kind—"and what," said he, pointing to a statue of himself, which stood on graceful tiptoe in the window, "what may be the price of that elegant image?"—"Sir,"—replied the artist, "you have proved so good a customer to me, for some of my best pieces, that I shall but do you justice, if I throw you that paltry figure into the bargain."'

Prevalent as every species of curiosity is among mankind, there is none which has so powerful an influence over every man, as this desire of knowing what the world may think of him. There is none, the gratification of which is so eagerly desired, or, in general, so heartily repented of.

A man in his absence will undoubtedly be spoken of with more freedom than when present; his faults will be more openly pointed out; his vices more strongly censured; his whole character will undergo a stricter examination, and will be scrutinized with less reserve, and more impartiality. Censure will not be restrained by the fear of giving offence; nor praise allured, by the hopes of conciliating affection.

Should he therefore take advantage of his supposed absence, to discover the true opinions of others with regard to himself, he will run no little risk of hearing disagreeable truths; which at the same time that they inform him of foibles in himself, against which he had hitherto shut his eyes, seldom or never fail to estrange his esteem from those, to whom he is indebted for the information.

Advice, however earnestly sought, however ardently solicited, if it does not coincide with a man's own opinions, if it tends only to investigate the improprieties, to correct the criminal excesses of his conduct; to dissuade from a continuance, and to recommend a reformation of his errors; seldom answers any other purpose than to put him out of humour with himself, and to alienate his affections from the adviser. If then, censure, even when thus courted under the name of kindness, is so destructive to all friendship, how much more so must it be, when being bestowed unasked and unavowed, its intention seems not so much to caution, as to criminate; to reform, as to condemn. For in this light must all strictures, passed on an absent person, appear to himself; when instead of the candour of open advice, the warnings of friendly admonition, he fancies that he discovers the meanness of secret calumny, the malice of deliberate detraction.

It cannot then but be evident to every man how dangerous an experiment it is, thus artfully to search

out the opinion others may entertain of him; which when discovered, is generally the cause of not a little mortification; and makes an impression on the mind, hardly ever to be effaced, by subsequent professions of esteem, or even series of disinterested services. An impression, which is deepened by a sense of the treachery of those, who took advantage of his absence to canvas his faults; and by a remembrance of the dishonest artifice by which he obtained a knowledge of their opinions.

And if it be thus necessary for every man to be cautious of prying into the opinions of others, with regard to himself, it is no less necessary that he should beware, before whom or what persons he delivers his own opinion. An unlucky censure, an unintentional sarcasm, has sometimes checked the progress of intimacy, has loosened the bonds of friendship, and has branded the unwary author of it with the title of a cynic, or a slanderer. I remember an instance of this kind, which though not very serious in its consequences, must nevertheless have been extremely distressing. A gentleman in a crowded theatre, turned suddenly round to a stranger who sat beside him, and inquired hastily 'what ugly hag was that coming into an opposite box?'—The stranger with a low bow of acknowledgment, replied, 'that it was his sister.' The gentleman, confounded and ashamed, made an eager but awkward endeavour to exculpate himself; and as errors, like misfortunes, seldom come singly,—'pardon me, Sir,' cried he, 'it was not that good-looking young lady, I meant to point out to you, but that deformed witch, that sits next to her.'—The stranger repeated his obeisance, and 'that, Sir,' said he, 'is my wife.' There is not perhaps another situation so distressing as one of this kind; where an unhappy mortal, having, by a casual inadvertency, made one false step, which he is unable to retrieve, becomes

conscious of his mistake; and, unwilling to go forward, yet knowing not how to recede, confused in apologies, and entangled in excuses, seeking in vain for some clue of explanation, wanders through a maze of error, and is lost in a labyrinth of perplexity. But it is not my intention to weary my readers, through the whole of this paper, with prudential cautions, and dogmas on discretion. I shall at present consider my subject only as it relates to myself. '*Scribam ipse de me.*' 'I will become my own historian,' says Cicero, in that extraordinary specimen of unbounded vanity, his letter to *Lucceius;* '*multorum tamen exemplo, et clarorum virorum,*' 'in imitation however of many and illustrious men.'—To become 'their own historians' has been the constant practice of all my illustrious predecessors; none of whom have omitted, in some part of their works, to descant on the importance and usefulness of their undertaking; to display the unavoidable inconveniences, or boast of the peculiar advantages incident to their situation.

Availing myself of these precedents, I may be allowed to boast, that there is no one who enjoys so many favourable opportunities of gratifying the curiosity, which I have made the subject of this paper, of discovering the real opinion my readers entertain of myself and my lucubrations. Personally unknown, even to my fellow-citizens, as Gregory Griffin, I am afforded considerable entertainment by becoming an auditor of their criticisms on the work, and a confidant of their conjectures on the author. Many a time have I heard in silence my own accusation; have joined in a general sneer, or even affected to participate in a hearty laugh at my own expense. And as often, to the great pain of my natural modesty, have I tacitly assented to the praise, or even loudly concurred in the commendations of my own performances. In trials of the former kind, I own I have sometimes found it diffi-

cult to restrain the feelings of an author; and have been ready to give vent to my indignation, when I have seen my labours degraded to the most menial employments, and insultingly placed under a pound of butter, or wrapped round the handle of a tea-kettle. At other times I have been sinking with shame, and confounded with gratitude, when I have chanced to meet with gentlemen, who have been so good as to clear me of all my faults, by kindly taking them on themselves; and candidly confessing, that they did send me this or that paper, and did give me permission to publish it, without acknowledging my obligations. To these gentlemen I am proud of an opportunity to return my thanks for the honour they confer on me, and to assure them that all my papers are very much at their service; provided only, that they will be so kind as just to send me previous notice which they may think fit to own; that my bookseller may have proper directions, if called upon, to confirm their respective claims; and for the prevention of any error, which might otherwise arise, should two persons unfortunately make the same choice.

In the course of the discoveries which have been confidentially imparted to me, I have been not a little amused by the variety of positive proofs on which each has grounded his knowledge of the author. So confident indeed have been some assertions, that I have been much staggered in my belief, and almost inclined to doubt my own identity. About three weeks ago I was very seriously alarmed, by intelligence which I received of an illness under which I then laboured. My informer was certain of his fact, but enjoined me not to mention it again; he had, it seems, been let into the secret by a friend of his, who had been told of it by an acquaintance of his, who had had it from a near relation of his, who had been informed of it by an intimate of her's, who had heard it from the

best authority. Here, indeed, was the clearest conviction, and proofs, which amounted to a certainty; and I really began to be very uneasy about the consequences of my indisposition, when I was happily relieved from my anxiety by another friend of mine, who, with like injunctions of secrecy, and equal positiveness of assertion, assured me that I was then very well, and had been seen in a commoner's gown at one of the Universities.

But nothing has diverted me more than the various strictures passed on me by such as have wished either to correct me by counsel, or damp me by discouragement. In these I have been frequently amused by a fair arrangement of contradictory criticisms, and objections which obviate each other. Awkward imitation—and affected originality; the ostentation of reading, and the want of it, have been carped at with equal severity. Some have objected to the '*price two-pence*,' and others to the '*præcox ingenium*.' Some are offended by the arrogance of unnecessary egotism; and others sneer at the unimportance of anonymous obscurity.

As specimens of these opposite censures, I shall subjoin a few short letters, by which various well-meaning persons have, at different times, kindly attempted my reformation.

'SIR,

'From the promising exordium of your elegant work, I own I expected to find much better amusement, and, let me add, instruction, than humorous caricaturas of the foibles and follies of your fellow-citizens; let me hope, Sir, you will no longer proceed on this plan, but will rise to subjects more worthy your genius and abilities.

I am, Sir, yours, AMICUS.

'*Lincoln's-Inn, Nov.* 25, 1786.'

'MR. GRIFFIN,

'I thought you promised, in the beginning of your work, that you would confine it to your fellow-citizens; this you have not done. You will, perhaps, answer, that you have at least chosen such subjects as would instruct and improve them. But that is not what I mean. In short, Sir, are we to have any satire, or are we not?

Yours, A FELLOW-CITIZEN.

'*Eton, Feb.* 19, 1787.'

'SIR,

'I am extremely pleased with the whole of your admirable work. It is a praiseworthy attempt, and, if it succeeds, which I cannot doubt, will reflect great honour on the place of our education. I hope you will continue to intersperse it throughout with poetical pieces; I received much pleasure from those which I have already perused, and am certain every one who views your work through a medium of candour must do the same.

I am, Sir, your admirer,

———————'

'MR. GREGORY,

'I like your work very well, upon the whole; very well indeed—but pray beware of poetry—stick to prose and you may succeed—but poetry, Sir, will never do. Another thing, Mr. G. I would advise you; to imitate Mr. Addison more,—you never can copy too closely so great an original. Take my advice, Sir, and believe me, your well wisher,

CRITICUS.'

'I write merely to warn you, Sir, that imitation, carried too far, becomes plagiarism. An Addison,

Sir, may be imitated too far. I hate e'en Garrick thus at second hand. Yours, CENSOR.'

'MY DEAR SIR,

'I am particularly pleased with your equitable treatment of correspondents, in paying so strict an attention to their communications, and yet not making that a plea for inactivity, or a remission of your weekly labours. That you may long continue to enjoy the reputation you so justly merit, is the sincere wish of, Sir, your admirer,

'*London, March* 1, 1787. E. P.'

As long as you gave one number a week, Mr. Griffin, it was very well, and I took two of each,—but now you give two every week; and though you pretend to do it out of justice to correspondents, let me tell you, Sir, it has a very mercenary appearance, and so long as this continues, I shall only take one of each, so you'll get nothing by it.

From your humble servant, ANAS!'

'SIR,

'In a literary performance by a juvenile author, I feared to find intermixed much of the common trash of periodical papers; stories of love adventures 'founded on facts,' luckless pairs, happy marriages, and jumbles of jealousy and sentimental affection;—I am, Sir, happily disappointed,—and hope you will continue, without any mixture of stuff about love, which young men ought to know nothing of, thus to amuse, your constant reader,

GERTRUDE GRUM.'

'MR. GRIFFIN, SIR,

'This comes to let you know, that though I can't write nor read, our Peter writes this for me, and I

hear all your papers read in our kitchen. I don't understand none of them, not I; but I see there's nothing at all about love, or about maid-servants making their fortunes by marriage. O! Mr. Griffin, if you be he, they says you be, you know the person that I love best. He is to be sure the prettiest behaved, sweetest young gentleman, and his name begins with a—no, but I wont tell you what his name begins with neither,—but could not you just give him a hint about his loving humble servant as he calls me, 'MARITORNES.'

'P.S. Peter can read, and write, and cipher too.'

I have taken some liberties with my last correspondent, in adjusting the orthography of her letter, so as to adapt it to common comprehension; if there is any other alteration, she must look for its cause in the P.S. where Peter (totally, I believe, with a view to his own aggrandizement, and without the privity and consent of his fair employer) declares his skill in *ciphering*, which he has practised with such success as to render the deciphering a matter of no small difficulty.

I shall not add any comment to the preceding letters, but leave them, like the gravitation and centrifugal force, which philosophers talk of, to counteract each other's tendency; and conclude my paper, as I began it, with a tale; which though perhaps it may be very old, enjoys a double advantage, which tales seldom do, of being extremely short, and extremely apropos.

A painter of great skill and eminence, who wished to have his work as free from blemishes, and as correctly beautiful as a picture could be made, hung it up one morning in the public market-place, with a request that every one would take the trouble to mark what he thought the faulty part of the performance. Coming in the evening to carry home

his picture, he was surprised and mortified to find every part of it covered with faults. Not a muscle of the body, or a feature of the face, but bore some sign of disapprobation. Resolving, however, to see whether his piece was entirely destitute of beauties, he hung it up next morning in the same place, desiring, that every one would be so kind as to set some mark on what he thought the excellences of the picture. Coming as before in the evening to carry it away, it was not a little consolation to him to find those very parts, that had before exhibited the strongest signs of dislike, now marked with the utmost encomium; to find, that if he had before had reason to lament having excited universal disgust, he might now be proportionably proud of having conciliated universal admiration.—B.

N° 19. MONDAY, MARCH 19, 1787.

Οἷον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης
Χώρῳ ἐν οἰοπόλῳ, ὅθ' ἁλις ἀναβέβρυχεν ὕδωρ,
Καλὸν, τηλεθάον, τὸ δέ τε πνοιαὶ δονέουσι
Παντοίων ἀνέμων, καὶ τε βρύει ἄνθει λευκῷ·
Ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξαπίνης ἄνεμος, σὺν λαίλαπι πολλῇ,
Βόθρου τ' ἐξέστρεψε, καὶ ἐξετάνυσσ' ἐπὶ γαίῃ.—HOMER's Iliad.

As the young olive in some sylvan scene,
Crown'd by fresh fountains with eternal green,
Lifts the gay head, in snowy flow'rets fair,
And plays and dances to the gentle air;
When lo! a whirlwind from high heav'n invades
The tender plant, and withers all its shades;
It lies uprooted in its genial bed,
A lovely ruin, now defac'd and dead.—POPE.

IT is an observation founded on a general survey of mankind, and which I am afraid a closer inspection would not controvert, that one half of the world knows not how the other exists. This how-

ever might in part be attributed to the insufficiency of human nature; were it not a melancholy truth, that their negligence in this point is equal to their ignorance. Nursed in the lap of luxury, the son of fortune, whose budding hopes have never been nipped by the blast of adversity, turns his eyes with contemptuous disgust from the cheerless scenes of penury and distress, to the dazzling glare, which, under pretence of lulling sorrow, stares reflection out of countenance, and convicts reason of Cynicism by the specious appearance of indulging harmless gaiety. The listless apathist, becalmed in his own insensibility, looks with a vacant eye on the terrors of conflicting passion; or as the utmost exertion of his pity, endeavours to allay the storm of a weak but generous mind, with the dictatorial precepts of a closeted philosopher.

Those of the above description I warn to proceed no farther in this paper. To the feeling, and in this community I should hope the major part of my readers, the authenticity of the following story will carry with it a sufficient apology.

The father of Frederic having from an early pique secluded himself from mankind, devoted an ample fortune to his family, his stables, and his cellar, in the extremity of Somersetshire. He was naturally of a morose, saturnine temper, which a considerable quantity of port, regularly discussed after dinner for a continuance of thirty years, had not a little contributed to heighten. The usual companion of his leisure hours was the parish attorney, a supple knave, who, as occasion served, could rail at the times, praise the wine, take snuff, or ring for *t'other bottle*. Argument, it is natural to suppose, would not have beguiled many hours with such a duumvirate; but the 'squire was distrustful of any thing human to be circumvented in the common way; and his Achates too much a master of arts to attempt it,

By a feint therefore at first of opposition, and at every convenient opportunity of conviction, he frequently flattered this petty tyrant more agreeably, and sometimes allured him to his own opinion. The subject of his eldest son's education was long on the tapis; the 'squire being too much of a misanthrope to relish the idea of a public school, and the lawyer too jealous of the boy's growing influence, not to wish so powerful an obstacle removed. At length however by a more than usual exertion of artifice, he wheedled the old gentleman out of his prejudices, and at ten years of age, Frederic was sent to Eton. Even at this early period the natural warmth of his disposition had begun to display itself. Open, candid, and generous, his heart was the constant companion of his hand, and his tongue the artless index of his mind. As his ideas expanded, his virtues seemed to have acquired a larger scope; and the unsuspecting generosity which had before induced him heedlessly to deposit his joys and griefs with every stranger, to have been matured into a warm philanthropic benevolence for human nature, and a romantic attachment to the few who were the more immediate objects of his affections. Exposed alike to the attacks of all generous passions, the impetuous sallies of his temper were as easily suppressed as excited. Jealous in the extreme of obligations, and keenly sensitive in any point which appealed to his honour or compassion, he was always a stranger to the calm serenity of a virtuous mind; and ultimately overwhelmed by those feelings which are so often the pleasing curse of a luxuriant imagination.

To these qualifications of the heart, Frederic added the endowments of an elegant fancy; often indeed too impatient of the necessary restrictions of art, but naturally corrected by so pure a taste, as to enable him to discern, with admirable perspicuity, the limits of true and false beauty; and those of his classical

compositions which peculiarly struck his ideas, united that vivid, energetic glow of thought, which true genius alone can conceive, to a simple chastity of expression which only correct judgment can define. As an agreeable polish to so much intrinsic merit, his countenance was lively and animated, his figure genteel, and his manners engaging.

In human as in inanimate nature, similar qualities will have a mutual attraction. By directing our thoughts to the same objects; by viewing each other's ideas with a sympathetic benevolence; nay, even by those friendly contests, which in the most perfect unanimity of opinion the digressive sallies of enthusiasm sometimes give rise to; but which tend only to diversify the calm of universal concurrence, we insensibly glide into that intimate harmony, without which society is but a state of armed neutrality, little superior to the open warfare of savage nature. By each of these ties was a romantic friendship cemented between Frederic and Edmond; their sentiments and inclinations mutually led them to a tender regard for each other's virtues. And as they were equally blessed with all external contingencies towards happiness in future, they looked forward with satisfaction to the scene of active life, which seemed to invite them to the honourable exertion of their abilities.

But alas! so fair a morning was overcast in its dawn. Frederic's virtues, which, though they could not have prolonged his existence, might at least have entitled him to a calm resignation of his breath, and the sublime satisfaction of a tranquil mind in the awful moment of dissolution, were blasted by the artful insinuations of a villain. The worthy perpetrator of this precious piece of villany, had, by magnifying puerile foibles into the premeditated depravities of a black heart, at length so estranged the affections of his father, as to prevail on him to make

a will entirely in his own favour: and the first notice of his displeasure was conveyed to Frederic by the executor, some days after his death.

Melancholy, to a soft and lively mind, is at first an unwelcome stranger; the propensity to indulge its sensations is strongly ingrafted in our natures, and we feel our own weakness though we cannot overcome it. It was in vain that Frederic called to mind every consolatory precept which philosophy can so well suggest, but human nature so ill practise, on these occasions; he began to lose his relish for society, and even to avoid the company of a friend, to whom he could now look on his attachment in no other light than as a burden. The quick jealousy of Edmond did not let this alteration pass unobserved. He endeavoured, by an increased attention, to dispel the cloud he perceived lowering on his friend's spirits; but in vain. Resolved therefore, by one effort, to request that confidence which his esteem taught him he was entitled to, he took the opportunity of communicating one day his observations, and complaining of that reserve which had before been a stranger to their intercourse. Frederic felt this reproach, and resolved to sacrifice his own feelings to those of his friend. 'Edmond,' said he, 'hitherto we have lived together in the most uninterrupted union; that we might have died as we have lived was the fondest hope my imagination ever cherished;—that hope is blasted. Whatever may have dictated this letter, I am guiltless of having given the most trivial occasion for it.' Edmond read the letter with that mixed emotion which a good mind feels at the calamity of a friend, and the prospect of relieving it. 'My friend,' he replied, 'what delicacy would otherwise have prevented me from pressing, your candour has forced from me; need I tell you, that providence has furnished me with ample means for our mutual happiness; despise, while I

have a hand to serve you, the frowns of fortune; and if that should fail, let us encounter poverty together, and die as we have lived, *united.*'—'No, Edmond, my pride forbids me to live a dependant even on your generosity; my misery shall never be a burden to you. The wide world is before me; my life has not been so blackened with guilt, but I shall somewhere find an asylum, however wretched, to exchange a miserable existence for a tranquil dissolution; may you run that race of glory which is denied to me; and may the recollection of your lost friend sometimes diffuse a pleasing melancholy over the moment of reflection; but never, never imbitter that uninterrupted felicity which your virtues are so amply entitled to.' Edmond had scarce strength to urge his request, till Frederic, foreseeing that the execution of his gloomy purpose might be prevented by the jealous vigilance of his friend, appeared by degrees to soften into compliance, and relieved his present anxiety by a momentary affectation of tranquillity. He was scarce however retired to his chamber, when, having directed a small note to Edmond, he threw himself into a chaise, and arrived late in the evening in the metropolis. Regardless of the objects around him, and solely enveloped in the contemplation of the scene he had just quitted, he threw himself on a bed in the inn at which he alighted; and with partial dozes, which only served to render his situation more horrible, he reflected on his miseries till morning. As soon as it was light, he determined to hire a lodging in some obscure part of the town, where he might elude the prying generosity of his friend, and endeavour to protract a miserable existence, which an enthusiastic sense of religion alone prevented him from sacrificing to his despair. For this purpose he fixed on a miserable garret, in those gloomy regions, at sight of which even adversity recoils; here, with the assistance of

a few books which he had brought with him for the purpose, he endeavoured to beguile that hollow misery which continually preyed on his vitals. And that no neglect of religious duty might imbitter his reflections, determined to apply himself to some means of supporting life. Still therefore cherishing the idea of independence, however wretched, he determined to enlist himself among a tribe of translators employed by an eminent bookseller; vainly hoping, that while he earned his miserable pittance, by a return of labour, the obligation would be considered as mutual. But he soon found that there is not so abject a slave as a hireling scribbler, nor so tyrannical a despot, as an illiterate churl, who pays for learning and potatoes with the same remorseless stupidity. The imperious arrogance of this bashaw, and the gross adulation and vulgar merriment of his fellow-servants, was little suited to the proud sensibility of Frederic. He endured, however, the insults of the one and jests of the others, till a fever, brought on by his continual agitation of spirits, actually deprived him of this means of earning a subsistence, and stretched him on his truckle-bed amidst all the horrors of famine, indigence, disease, and despair.

In the mean time, Edmond, whose violent affliction for the departure of his friend, had for some time reduced his life to a precarious situation; as soon as he found his health in some degree re-established, determined to abandon a spot which only presented to his mind a gloomy recollection of the days that were gone, and to follow the fortunes of his friend. Having accordingly laid the circumstances before his father, he obtained a full permission to gratify his inclination. He repaired to London, as supposing Frederic would abscond in some obscure spot of a labyrinth in which he was most likely to be effectually concealed.

After a fortnight's fruitless search, when a settled gloom had began to throw a damp on all his hopes of success, happening one day to enter the shop of Frederic's late employer, he overheard the literary monarch enforcing his daily rebuke with sundry oaths and ejaculations; and among other particulars, bitterly complaining of the absence of the pale dismal young man, who had lately enlisted in his service. This description immediately figured to his imagination his dejected friend;—tremblingly alive with this idea, he eagerly inquired his lodging, determining immediately to satisfy the fearful curiosity which his late absence had inspired. His first emotions a little subsided, he resolved previously to apply for medical assistance; that in case of any urgent necessity, it might be at hand. For this purpose he visited the late Dr. ———, and it was by his advice, that he determined to spare his friend's weak and exhausted spirits the agitation of a sudden interview.

It was not without considerable emotion that Edmond entered a dreary hut, whose very appearance was calculated to inspire misery; it was from the hag who owned this mansion, that he learned, that her lodger had for some time kept his bed; and was so reduced, by three days' almost total abstinence, as to be frequently deprived of understanding. Shocked as he was at this information, he saw the propriety of the physician's advice sufficiently, to take his stand at the door of the apartment, in order to watch the most favourable opportunity for an interview.

Frederic's strength had been that evening so far exhausted by a preceding delirium as to afford him for a short time the wretched possession of his faculties. He was kneeling with great apparent agony, before a Bible, and grasping with a convulsive gripe the foot of his bed, as if by the exertion of his nerves,

to awaken his fainting soul from the torpor which seemed to be gathering on it at every interval of impassioned frenzy. There is in solitary misery, a comfortless horror in brooding over misfortunes, which far exceeds even the cutting pangs we feel when those we love are involved in our calamities. In the latter situation we have a pleasing object to rest the external sense on; and the very gratification of our feelings on such an occasion, diffuses a tranquil luxury over our sorrows; in the former, all is dark and comfortless, and a gnawing horror perpetually suggests ideas, which the gangrened imagination, while it trembles to nourish, is unable to resist the indulgence of. Such was the situation of Frederic, when the recollection of the past, the horror of the present, and the prospect of the future, drew from the bottom of his soul, 'Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest.' Edmond could at this ejaculation no longer contain himself, but rushing into the room, and hanging over his fainting friend, 'All may yet be well,' said he, 'we may yet live to renew our pleasures; to pursue those fond projects which your too delicate generosity has so cruelly interrupted!' The well-known voice sounded on Frederic's dying senses, and recalled a momentary exertion of his languid spirit; 'Never, never; it is past! Oh! Edmond, it is past!'—then darting a look of despairing agony to Heaven, he exclaimed, in a trembling voice, 'My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?' and sinking into the arms of his friend, groaned out his soul, and expired.—C.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TOGATUS must have entered very dully into the spirit of the numbers he objects to; I shall exemplify my *power of rejection*, in the non-insertion of

his letter. I shall be happy in the future correspondence of SIMON SNUBNOSE; at present I fear he glances too much on politics for admission.

N° 20. MONDAY, MARCH 26, 1787.

Fratrem facere ex hostibus.—PLAUT.
To make a brother of a foe.

HAVING occasion lately to refer to a chronological epitome, I accidentally cast my eyes on the name of Julius Cæsar; and it was not without some emotion, that I read the following account of so extraordinary a character:

'Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, born July 10, 100, invaded Britain, landing at Deal, August 26th, 55, killed in the Senate-house, March 15, 44, A. C. after having fought fifty battles, slain above 1,192,000 men, and taken by assault 1000 towns.'

Whether the compiler of this work has thus briefly given this list of destruction, without mentioning its causes, with a view to stigmatize Cæsar as an execrable tyrant, or that he really considered these exploits as the most striking instances of his greatness, is not for me to determine; certain it is, that a self-taught philosopher would form but an indifferent opinion of mankind in general, should he, from this sketch, derive his knowledge of a hero, whose name is idolized as the standard of human greatness; whose actions command the admiration even of his enemies; and whose imitation terminates the most extensive prospects of ambition.

In this paper, therefore, I shall endeavour to prove, that it was not on the sacking of a thousand towns,

with the murder or alienation of their inhabitants, that Cæsar laid the foundations of that immortality, the desire of which seems to have given motion to the designs of his capacious ambition; and roused every nerve to those astonishing exertions which characterize his measures as well in the cabinet as in the field. That he understood and practised the noblest art of conquest, by attacking the generosity of his enemies in preference to their fears. And that, if his ambition was of that kind which some have represented it, a more daring piece of injustice was never directed to more beneficial purposes.

A dauntless resolution, and cunning revenge, says Machiavel, are the most effectual assistants to ambition. How false this position is, we may ourselves conclude, when we see Borgia employing a life of fraud, in an unsuccessful attempt to acquire a petty principality; Julius, by an open liberality of sentiment, and a thorough knowledge of the human heart, rising from the inspection of weights and measures, to wield the sceptre of the world: the career of the former checked by the recoil of his own artifice, and himself protracting his miserable existence in the horrors of a debilitated constitution, and the disappointment of blasted ambition; the latter, nobly sinking in the very theatre of his glory, by the hands of those whom even in death he had the satisfaction of upbraiding with their ingratitude.

Cæsar's is a character, which, though more generally known, has perhaps been less equitably investigated than any other in history. Dazzled with the lustre of his successes, a kind of reverential awe deters us from tracing their progress; or, if we cursorily examine it, we are prejudiced against him by what is imagined his prime motive, the aggrandizement of himself: and conceive, that as he was the first man who established despotism on any

permanent footing in Rome, he must necessarily have been the oppressor of his country. His partisans have lost the vices of his heart, in the greatness of his mind; and his detractors have reduced even the virtues of a generous temper, to the cold prudence of political foresight.

Should I endeavour to examine, whether, in a corrupted commonwealth a man is to be so far actuated by self-preservation, as to make himself first, where to be second is death; and where the contest is, who shall first seize illegal power to the prejudice of the other, whether ambition is justified in bearing an active part; I should approach nearer to a metaphysical, than an historical, disquisition. I shall therefore content myself with taking a short view of the conduct of Julius, when compared with that of Sylla and Augustus. For as all were nearly or precisely in the same situations, as all had equal power, all were exposed to the same temptations, and all had the same plea for the exercise of those cruelties, which the insolence of success, or political jealousy might dictate, the characters may surely be equitably compared; and the merits of each impartially distinguished.

The massacre of the Villa Publica, and the bloody tribunal of Mutina, are incontestible proofs of the savage depravity human nature is capable of, when steeled by the success of illegal ambition, or the avidity of premeditated revenge. But Sylla, it may be answered, was only retaliating on the Marians; and Augustus was gratifying a laudable resentment, when persecuting the murderers of his uncle. Yet Julius had both these instigations; an imitation of Sylla had been the constant threat of Pompey in consequence of a victory; and those who experienced the generosity of Cæsar, were the very assassins who had been instrumental to the murder of his relations. The unfeeling cruelty of Sylla, and the cold satur-

nine revenge of Augustus, are proofs of black and depraved hearts, which we no where find in Julius: on the contrary, if we may credit the testimony of Suetonius, and other writers of his history, he seems to have expressed a concern for the alternative he was reduced to on the eve of every important enterprise during his civil wars; and even to have turned with horror and commiseration from the bleeding head of his most inveterate enemy. His apparent severity to the barbarians during his provincial administration, has with some appearance of reason been considered as a stigma on his character; but if we trace this consummate general through his operations in Gaul, if we thoroughly examine the character of the surrounding nations, their ferocity when conquerors, and their perfidy when admitted to equitable terms, we shall immediately acquit him of wanton cruelty; and refer any apparent act of injustice to the necessity he was under of subduing, by violent and arbitrary measures, a people, whose fears were their only ties of fidelity. Their entire subjection was absolutely necessary to the safety of the Romans, whose inmost barrier they surrounded on every side; yet even in this dangerous situation, Cæsar, on every possible occasion, preferred the more gentle method of expostulation and reproof, to those bloody remedies which seem to have been so repugnant to his disposition.

A similar behaviour in the succeeding age of so unimpeached a character as Germanicus, will sufficiently evince the necessity of seasonable acts of violence among barbarians. '*Orabat,*' says Tacitus, when describing his conduct in the midst of an engagement, '*insisterent cædibus; solam internecionem gentis finem bello fore.*' 'He entreated them to pursue their slaughter; that the extirpation of the whole race alone would put an end to the war;' plainly proving, by this unusual eagerness for bloodshed in

so humane a conqueror, that it is sometimes necessary to frighten into servitude, those who cannot be enticed into alliance.

From these appearances then, however his boundless ambition may have blinded him to the nicer distinctions of right and wrong, may we conclude, that it was not from a promiscuous effusion of blood, and the undistinguished mass of a million of carcasses, that Cæsar strove to deserve the name of *great;* and that by whatever excesses it was gained, no man ever made a more temperate use of illegal authority. Nay, even admitting what it is improbable to suppose, that this lenity proceeded not from a disposition naturally merciful, but from a refinement in political artifice, the man whose reason will enable him so far to subject his resentments to his interest, has at least the merit of promoting, with his own, the common interest of mankind.

And here it may not be amiss to examine the tendency of this forgiving principle, which is so peculiarly the offspring of Christianity, that the contrary seems almost to have been a tenet of Heathen morality. For we find those alone among the ancients, whose greatness of mind, or purity of morals, as it were, instinctively dictated to them some of the leading points in the gospel doctrine, to have effected, or even conceived, this philosophic conquest over the passions. Lycurgus, Aristides, Titus, Trajan, and Adrian, are striking instances of this; nor have we any example of the remembrance of an injury voluntarily foregone by a Claudius or a Tiberius. The reason is obvious; the mind of man naturally recoils at an indignity; and it is as much in our natures to seek the gratification of our revenge by the destruction of the offending object, as it is in the adder to wound the heel which treads on it. Unenlightened then, and undirected, how can man so far counteract the operations of his nature, as to

detect the insidious treachery of this passion; and sacrifice what he considers a just resentment, to what the world would name a blamable timidity.

But let it not be imagined that the suppression of a passion so invariably implanted in our nature, will tend at all to apathise the finer feelings of the soul; or that the patient endurance of the primitive Christian, borders on the haughty insensibility of the Stoic. In the very suffering an injury, a great mind feels a conscious satisfaction, in pity for the petulant weakness of the injurer; and in forgiving it, the sublime pleasure which this art of upbraiding an enemy into a friend, never fails to inspire. Revenge may for a moment cast an illusive gleam over the mind, but is incapable of lulling those reflections its consequences may give rise to; or obtaining that complete triumph over the inclinations of a fallen enemy.

But however this principle might tend to the happiness or aggrandizement of human nature, its superior advantages, without the assistance of revealed religion, would probably have never been thoroughly understood. For though in some instances the practice of it in the Heathen world may seem to stagger this opinion, their most refined philosophy has never ranked it in their catalogue of virtues; or considered it as one of those unalterable dogmas which constitute a wise and good man. In the disputations of the Socratic school, and the philosophic retirement of Tusculum, the subjection of ambition, pleasure, and the other leading passions of the human mind, to the calm and dispassionate direction of wisdom, were discussed with the utmost refinement of wit and knowledge; and still remain the interesting pictures of superior understanding, emerging from the darkness of superstition, and struggling for liberality of sentiment, amidst the disadvantages of Pagan prejudice: while retaliation

of injuries, nay, even hereditary enmities, were considered not as the weaknesses, but almost the absolute duties of human nature.

So seldom do we find this principle characterized in the writings of the ancients, that it was with some difficulty I could find a motto for this paper; and had I not been afraid of so early alarming my fellow-citizens, I had at one time some thoughts of referring to the Greek testament for that purpose. Homer has described but one of his heroes as being *ενηής τε κρατερὸς τε, gentle and valiant.* Even in the amiable Hector, who unites in his character the patriot, the son, the husband, and father, we do not find the superior generosity of foregoing his resentments. And Virgil's '*parcere subjectis*' may rather be considered as descriptive of the imperious condescension of the Roman senate, than that refined lenity which strives to obliterate the obligation in the manner of conferring it. Cæsar indeed, in his letter to Oppius, has a profession of this virtue; but as I have in a great measure interwoven his defence with my subject, a quotation from him might have been considered as a partial evidence. I do not recollect that in any other passage of the more familiar classics, there is any thing perfectly descriptive of it; nay, even amidst the sounding pageantry of title with which their poets have decked the heathen deities, there is none in my opinion so comprehensively expressive of the divine attributes, as the simple and unaffected address of ALMIGHTY AND MOST MERCIFUL FATHER.—C.

*

N° 21. MONDAY, APRIL 2, 1787.

Chloreaque, Sybarimque, Daretaque, Thersilochumque.
VIRGIL'S Æn. 12. v. 363.

Chloreus, and Sybaris, and Dares, and Thersilochus.

To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR,

'THE author, from whom I have adopted this motto, has been justly esteemed of all poets, both ancient and modern, the most pathetic. But perhaps, if every passage, whose excellence consisted in awaking the tender feelings of the reader, should be collected and compared together, there would not be found one, in which the writer has displayed a greater share of sensibility than in this single line which I have selected.

'Such indeed with me has been the influence of the above-mentioned hexameter, that I never could reflect, without indignation and astonishment, that Virgil, who had been so liberally rewarded for twenty-six lines in the sixth book of his Æneid, should for this never have received the gratuity of a farthing. In whatever point of view the two passages shall be examined, it will be found that the latter is in all respects equal if not superior to the former. There is no one, I believe, who will be so hardy as to deny, that the verse, for whose merit I am contending, is eminently distinguished by every quality, which the critics have deemed necessary to the constitution of the most beautiful poetry. If the greatest originality of thought, the noblest simplicity of expression, the most exquisite pathos, and the finest adaption of the sound to the sense, can

entitle a verse to the name of excellent, I shall not hesitate to pronounce, that the one I am speaking of, is as worthy of admiration as any in the poem.

'In order to see whether it be so, let us try it in each of the above particulars; though I am sensible, that there are people who have been bold enough to assert, that the names which it contains are borrowed from history or tradition, I cannot but look upon myself as in duty bound to believe, that they are the genuine offspring of the poet's imagination. For as no such tradition is now current, and as no such history has ever been produced, charity demands of me, that I should incline to the favourable side of the question. In this I am the more particularly justified, when I reflect, that Virgil, from other parts of his works, has given us strong reason to conclude that he was abundantly capable of inventing for himself, what he is here accused of having taken from another. With regard to simplicity, I should hold myself much indebted to any individual, who would point out to me, in the whole compass of poetry, one single passage by which in this respect the motto of my letter has ever been exceeded. Though the expression be plain and unaffected, there is nothing that borders upon meanness; and although it is copious, there is nothing redundant. Though it is level with the capacity of a child, it extorts admiration from the wisdom of old age.

'Let us now see how excellent is the versification; and how well it is suited to the meaning which the words are intended to convey. The author's purpose was certainly to awaken the finer sensibilities of the soul, to shew us how suddenly the life of mortals passeth away; and how many there are who seem to have existed, merely that they might by their fall give a lustre to others. How admirably the flow of the verse in consideration is calculated to suggest these ideas, the most undistinguishing and

most unpractised ear cannot but discern. For besides, that there is in the general run of the line something most musically mournful and melancholy, the Cæsura after the first foot has wonderfully tended to promote this effect. The reader naturally expects after a dactyle to rest upon a long syllable, but here he is unhappily deceived, and the ground which he imagined to be firm, sinks as it were beneath him. How ingeniously does this illustrate the case of mankind, who are apt to regard this life as a permanent possession; but soon find, that they have leaned upon a reed.

Lastly, let us consider this line with regard to the pathetic. For my own part, I could scarcely ever peruse it without shedding tears. If there be a man who would feel no emotion in reading over an enumeration of personages, whose existence is never mentioned but once, and that only in order to tell you how it was concluded, I should be apt, against such a one to exclaim with my favourite author,

> ———duris genuit te cautibus horrens
> Caucasus, Hircanæque admôrunt ubera tigres.
>
> ———Caucasus, with rocks
> Horrid, disclosed him from his flinty sides,
> And fierce Hyrcanian tigers gave him suck.—TRAPP.

Supposing, however, that people of this disposition are rarely to be met with, I shall take the liberty of addressing myself to my reader, as to one who will think and sympathize with me. Gentle, therefore, and courteous as I take thee to be, I cannot but imagine that thou art troubled with the same melancholy reflections as I am, whenever thou beholdest a catalogue of persons who are supposed indeed to have existed, but of whom history has left us no trace or memorial, except their names. For my part I must confess, that no invention of poets, however artful, no tale of novelists, however tender, no eloquence of orators, however elaborate, no narrative

of historians, however tragical, has such power to work upon my affections, as the simple and unadorned pages of a parish register. If I should attempt to account for this effect, I would refer it to two causes; the one, as they tend to inspire us with melancholy and mortifying ideas of human nature itself; and the other as they bring home a painful truth to the bosom of almost every individual. Considering how small is the number of persons, whose superior qualifications of intellect or body can enable them to survive the lapse of a single century, there are surely few, whose endowments, whether fancied or real, can prevent them from ranking themselves in the number of those who are soon to be forgotten. In reading those affecting catalogues of the living and the dead, which are to met with in almost every village of the kingdom, we are apt, upon recollecting the truth of the above observation, to put this simple question to ourselves, 'Have I any reason to suppose, that nature has bestowed upon me such pre-eminence of mind or body, as may rescue my name from that oblivion which is the general lot of humanity?' Here vanity and ambition tempt me to say Yes; but truth, like Tisiphone, stares me in the face, 'till I am compelled to answer No.

Dreary as this idea may be, perhaps we are little less mortified, when we turn from ourselves, in order to survey the world at large; to reflect, that amidst so many millions, so inconsiderable a portion should be able to erect for themselves a memorial of a thousand years; that few have wanted the vanity to aspire to what still fewer have had the felicity to succeed in; that the same end has been attempted by means diametrically opposite; and that the most laborious efforts of virtue and vice, of laudable and perverted ambition, have often been exhausted in vain.

Indeed, the idea of being utterly forgotten after death is so repugnant to the first and ruling princi-

ples of our nature, that I am little surprised at the extravagant audacity of that man, who, resolving to be known to posterity, seized probably upon the only method which lay within the reach of his abilities, by setting fire to the magnificent temple at Ephesus. The desire of being distinguished, when we are present, and of being remembered when we are absent, is the first passion which discovers itself in our youth; and the last which adheres to us in our old age. You, Sir, must frequently have observed, how fond the citizens of your little world are of carving their names upon every form and wainscot in the school. Though this I know is apt to enflame the breast of a master with wrath and indignation, I cannot but confess, that to my mind it suggests a number of melancholy and pleasing ideas. The sight of these curious engravings, brings naturally to my recollection, that I was lately at school myself; that I was engaged in the same amusements and pursuits with those around me; that I took the same methods to immortalize my name which they have done; and that I failed in the attempt, which they too may find to have been the case with themselves hereafter.

In order to shew how firmly this desire of immortality is retained by us in the last period of our existence, I cannot help mentioning Mr. Powel, the fire-eater, whom I remember to have seen at Eton. This gentleman, after having amused myself with eating lead, brimstone, and sealing wax, melted down together, observed to the company, that he was advancing, by very rapid strides, towards 'that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns.' He consoled himself however with the idea, that the miracle which he was performing upon his body, would be retained with joy in the memories of the spectators, at a time when that body should be lying in the dust. Trivial as to some philosophers may appear to have been the object of this man's

ambition, I cannot help thinking, that this was the ointment which counteracted the natural influence of the lava which he had been devouring. For it is with difficulty that I can conceive a person undergoing such painful operations, and contenting himself with such unpalatable food, unless he was instigated by some greater inducement than the trifling emoluments accruing from his exhibitions.

Here I cannot help staying to pay my tribute of applause to the worth of so great a man. However some people may affect to despise the object of Mr. Powel's ambition, I shall make it my business to shew, that it was not inconsistent with the dignity of a man, a philosopher, and a Christian. How many stoics have consigned their names to immortality, without any pretensions to those sublime virtues which are conspicuous in the character of Mr. Powel? It was the highest boast of a stoic, that he could look with adamantine indifference on the death of his nearest relations: in how much more amiable, and how much more heroic a light does the conduct of Mr. Powel appear to us! So far from steeling his heart with the unnatural apathy of a stoic, he exulted in the warm benevolence of a Christian; and submitted to the most fiery trials, merely to entertain those with whom he had not the most distant connexion. By way of corollary (to use a term in mathematics), what would not this man have undergone to serve his friends? If we might reason from arguments *a fortiori*, we should conclude, that he would have rejoiced to follow even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. After what I have said, I should imagine, that few will deny to Mr. Powel the merit of patience the most enduring, combined with a philanthropy the most comprehensive. There is another virtue in which I think the character of Mr. Powel may stand in competition with that of the most exalted heroes of antiquity—I mean tempe-

rance. Seneca indeed has talked to us in very lofty terms of the abstinence of some of the earlier worthies of his own country, and those of Lacedæmon; the diet of the former was such as would at this day be esteemed a luxury by thousands; and as for the black broth of the latter, I do not recollect, amidst all the ingredients which composed it, that melted lead, sealing-wax, and brimstone, were ever included. As a patriot, I consider Mr. Powel as one of the greatest that this century can boast of; for though I do not recollect that he was ever called out by any particular emergency to take an active part in the defence of his country, who can believe, that a person to whom fire had been literally meat, drink, and clothing, would not naturally fly where war grew hottest; and would consequently be most congenial to his disposition and occupations in life? Now, if we sum up our evidence, we shall find, that the sublimer virtues of patience, temperance, and patriotism; together with the softer and more amiable ones of philanthropy and friendship, were of course included in the art which Mr. Powel professed: we shall not hesitate therefore a moment in pronouncing the object of his ambition to have been compatible with the character of a wise and good man.

I cannot conclude this paper without regretting my inability to perpetuate the memory of this illustrious Phenomenon of Salamandership and virtue. This however I can assure him, if my feeble endeavours could effect it, 'his name should flourish in the mouths of men.'—L.

N° 22. MONDAY, APRIL 9, 1787.

Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris.—HORACE.
Such honour common subjects may receive.

'SIR,

'IT must no doubt often have occurred to a writer of your penetration, that there is nothing more unjust, and illiberal, than those of ill-grounded prejudices, which confound in general censure, or undistinguishing contempt, any particular class or description of men. And yet these prejudices, however sensible we cannot but be of their improper tendency, we are all too apt to indulge; till nourished by long habit, they take as deep a root in our minds as if they had been implanted there by nature; and acquire such strength, as enable them to withstand the most forcible arguments, to resist the most probable conviction.

'There are in Turkey a body of men, against whom universal contempt is indiscriminately, as well as undeservedly directed; and these are the worshipful company of Grocers. Insomuch, that should any member of a noble family have disgraced himself and his connexions, by living a life of tranquillity, or, what is worse, dying in his bed, that is, a natural death, his name is never pronounced by his relations but with disapprobation and disgust; and his memory is consigned to infamy, for having, as they say, lived and died like a Raccal, or Grocer.

'The person who has now the honour to address you, is a member of a community, who, by the courtesy of England, are like the Raccals of Turkey, collectively involved in the most indiscriminate ridicule, the most comprehensive contempt; I say col-

lectively, Sir, because, individually we are allowed to have no existence; the wicked waggery of the world, judging nine Weavers and nine Tailors requisite to the formation of a man. Yes, Sir, to so high a pitch have they carried the disrespect in which these professions are held, that in the eyes of "the many," (as the poet calls them) to address a man by the appellation either of a Weaver or Tailor, implies not only, as formerly, a reflection on his horsemanship, but on his personal courage, and even his personal existence.

'I, Sir, am a Weaver; I feel for the injured dignity of my profession; and since, thanks to my own genius, and two years and a half of education at an academy on Tower-hill, I have a very decent acquaintance with the Classics; that is, I know them all by name, and can tell Greek when I see it, any day in the week; and since, as far as Shakspeare's plays, and the Monthly Magazines go, I have a very pretty share of English book-learning; from these considerations, Mr. Griffin, I think myself qualified to contend; not for the utility and respectability only, but for the honour of the art of Weaving. Tailoring, as it is secondary to Weaving, will of course partake of the fruits of my labours: as in asserting the dignity of the one, I maintain the credit of the other.

'To this end, Mr. Griffin, I shall not appeal to the candour of my readers, but shall provoke their judgment; I shall not solicit their indulgence, but by the force of demonstration will claim their assent, to my opinion.

'Poetry, Sir, is universally allowed to be the first and noblest of the arts and sciences; insomuch, that it is the opinion of critics, that an epic poem is the greatest work the human mind is capable of bringing to perfection. If then I can prove, that the art of Weaving is in any degree analogous to

the art of Poetry; if this analogy has been allowed by the whole tribe of critics! so far, that in speaking of the latter they have used the terms of the former, and have passed judgment on the works of the Poet in the language of the Manufacturer; nay, if Poetry herself has condescended to imitate the expressions, and to adopt the technical terms into her own vocabulary; then may I surely hope, that the sanction of Criticism may challenge the respect, and the flattery of Poetry (for imitation is the highest degree of flattery) may claim the admiration of mankind.

'First then with regard to Criticism; to select a few examples from a multitude of others, are we not entertained in the works of Longinus and the Gentleman's Magazine, with delectable dissertations on the Weaving of plots and the Interweaving of episodes? Are we not continually informed, that the Author unravels the Web of his intrigue, or breaks the Thread of his narration? Besides these, a friend of mine, a great etymologist, has assured me, that Bombast and Bombasin originally sprung from the same root; and Fustian, every body knows, is a term applied indifferently to passages in poetry, or materials for a pair of breeches. So similar is considered the skill employed in the Texture of the Epic Poem and a piece of Broad Cloth; so parallel the qualifications requisite to throw the Shuttle and guide the Pen.

'I was not a little pleased the other day to find, in the critique of one of the most eminent writers of the present day, the works of a favourite poet styled a Tissue. An idea then occurred to me, suggested perhaps by my partiality for my profession, which I am not without some faint hope of one day seeing accomplished.

'By a little labour and ingenuity, it might surely be discovered, that the works of different Authors bear a considerable affinity (like this of the Tissue),

to the different productions of the Loom. Thus, to enumerate a few instances, without any regard to chronological order, might not the flowery smoothness of Pope be aptly enough compared to Flowered Sattin? Might not the compositions of all the Poets laureate, ancient and modern, very properly be termed Princes Stuff? And who would dispute the title of Homer, to Everlasting? For Shakspeare, indeed, I am at a loss for a comparison, unless I should liken him to those Shot Silks, which vary the brightness of their hues into a multitude of different lights and shades. And would orthography allow of the pun, I might say, that there are few poets but would be proud to be thought worthy of the Green Bays.

'For proof of the use which Poetry makes of the Weaver's dictionary, *vide* ten thousand Odes on Spring; where you may catch the fragrance of the Damask rose; listen to the restling of the Silken foliage; or lie extended with a listless languor, pillowing your head upon the Velvet mead; to say nothing of Nature's Loom, which is set to work regularly on the first of May, to weave variegated carpets for the lawns and landscapes. Now, Mr. Griffin, these similitudes, though very pretty and very *a propos*, I own I am not perfectly satisfied with. The Genoese certainly excel us in the article of Velvets; and the French Silks are by many people far preferred for elegance to any of English manufacture. I appeal then to you, Mr. Griffin, if these allusions would not be much more delightful to British ears, if they tended to promote such manufactures as are more peculiarly our own. The Georgics of Virgil, let me tell you, Sir, have been suspected by some people, to have been written with a political, as well as poetical view; for the purpose of converting the victorious spirits of the Roman soldiery from the love of war, and the seve-

rity of military hardships to the milder occupations of peace, and the more profitable employments of agriculture. Surely, equally successful would be the endeavours of our poets, if they would boldly extirpate from their writings every species of foreign manufacture; and adopt, in their stead, materials from the prolific looms of their countrymen. Surely, we have a variety which would suit all subjects and all descriptions;—nor do I despair, if this letter has the desired effect, but I shall presently see landscapes beautifully diversified with (all due deference being paid to alliteration) plains of Plush, pastures of Poplin, downs of Dimity, vallies of Velveret, and meadows of Manchester. How gloriously novel would this be; how patriotically poetical an innovation; which nothing but bigotted prejudice could object to, nothing but disaffection to the interests of the country could disapprove.

'Excuse me, Sir, if I have detained you beyond the usual limits of a letter, on a subject, in which I am so deeply interested. Pardon, Sir, the partiality of an old man, to the profession of his youth; and, O! Mr. Griffin, may your paper be the means of restoring from unmerited ridicule and illiberal contempt, an Art, which has added a clearness and a polish to the remarks of Criticism; and has clothed the conceptions of Poetry in the language of Metaphor: an Art, inferior to none, but those which have so frequently and so successfully borrowed its assistance; nor even to them, unless it can be proved, that that which provides the necessary raiment for the body, should yield to those which are but the sources of amusement to the mind. I am, Sir, yours, &c. H. HOMESPUN.'

I cannot but own myself much pleased with the enthusiasm which seems to animate my correspon-

dent, while he treats on a subject so near his heart. He has, I can assure him, my full approbation to his proposed improvements; and I am convinced every well-meaning person in his Majesty's kingdoms must feel the force of his reasoning.—Will any caviller presume to contend, that our looms are not as fertile of poetic imagery, as those of our neighbours? Have we not handkerchiefs of printed cotton, crowded with all the beauties of rural scenery? and 'azure flowers that blow,' in the carpets of the Wilton manufactory? Nay, even supposing an unquestionable inferiority on the side of the English looms, would not every Englishman still shew a laudable partiality to his country? and by such a preference, what he lost in Poetry, would he not amply make up in Patriotism?

In short, so convinced am I by Mr. Homespun's arguments, that I cannot help taking the earliest opportunity to recommend to such of my correspondents, as may have been induced by the forwardness of the season, to begin Odes on Spring for the use of the Microcosm, that they would be careful to stick to the productions of the English loom, if they think it necessary to draw Metaphors from Weaving at all; that is, if they do really think, that Nature can be embellished by the technical terms of Art; and that the works of the Creator can receive additional beauty by being assimilated to those of the Manufacturer: which, in my humble opinion, I will confess, does not appear to be the case.

I know no better advice that I can give to my Correspondents on this head, unless indeed it were not to write 'Odes on Spring' at all.—B.

I shall take this opportunity of obviating an objection which has been made to my deviation from my original plan, of devoting this work particularly

to Eton College. Those who have considered my occasional sallies into the wider field of history or speculation as a violation of this promise, must entertain no very high idea of our little world, if they suppose, that a weekly siege of some one of its follies, would furnish employment for a long campaign; or, that the example of an equal, is not of as much efficacy to lead the younger part of it to a more serious exercise of thought, than generally distinguishes their years, as his admonitions are to deter them from error.

It has been observed likewise, that in some few instances I have ventured to attack received opinions; in answer to this, if it has ever been the case, so pointedly at least as to give umbrage to the more experienced part of my readers, I shall plead the example of the Roman orators, whose first *coup d'essai* was universally the impeachment of some powerful offender; which attack, though not always attended with success, was looked upon as the most certain road to future popularity. Nor indeed have I any other method

> Quâ me quoque possim
> Tollere humo.—VIRGIL.
> To raise myself from earth.

A trite precept of morality would be but ill received by those, who, from the unprecedented novelty of my undertaking, expect rather to be pleased with the enthusiastic though perhaps mistaken ideas of a juvenile knight errant; than instructed with the gleanings of all the moral and philosophic pens. whose authority has from time to time established these common place data.

*

N° 23. MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1787.

If there be any land, as fame reports,
Where common laws restrain the prince and subjects;
A happy land, where circulating power
Flows thro' each member of the embodied state;
Sure not unconscious of the mighty blessing,
Her grateful sons shine bright with every virtue;
Untainted with the lust of innovation,
Sure all unite to hold her league of rule,
Unbroken as the sacred chain of nature,
That links the jarring elements in peace.

JOHNSON'S Irene.

FROM a subject that has been so often handled as the various modes and forms of government, little novelty can be expected; and the ablest pen could effect no more, than to place in new lights, or clothe in different words, those arguments which have been urged for ages by the advocates of different parties. As I am not qualified by my years or experience to decide amidst such contending factions, or to give any additional weight to either side by a declaration of my opinion, my only endeavour in this essay shall be to collect and place in one point of view, the most important points of the controversy; to rest my assertions not on the frail foundations of speculation, but experience; and by exhibiting the several expedients of human wisdom for the regulation of society, make my fellow-citizens sensible of the blessings of that constitution, under which we live; and to the protection of whose privileges they will most probably hereafter be summoned.

To trace the progress of legal government, from the simple subordination of the patriarchal power, to the complex system of modern politics; to make the gradual increase and extension of acknowledged

authority from the head of a single family to the sovereignty of a mighty empire, may prove an ample reward to the toil of useful curiosity; but it is a task beyond the limits of my paper, or the extent of my abilities. I shall therefore pass over the subject, and content myself with this remark; that it is absolutely necessary to the existence of civil society, that for the public good, the individual should resign a part of his natural independence, and bind himself by some common tie or obligation, to the observance of a known and fixed law. As this is the corner stone of all civil institutions, and one of those self-evident propositions which do not admit of a doubt, I shall not farther insist upon it; but proceed in my examination of those different branches, which shot forth from the parent stock of patriarchal government. At this simple period, the ideas of men were confined within a narrow circle, and to the objects more immediately before them; their present subsistence was almost their only care, and the possessions of a fertile pasturage, or a * spring to water their flocks, employed the petty politics of this guiltless age. It is not from these men we are to expect the refinements of government; for the nice balance between opposite interests, the discrimination between the right of the sovereign, the nobility, and the people, or that equal composition of different parts, which form the perfect whole, and like the symmetry of a well-turned arch, mutually prop and support each other. As the patriarchal government was only calculated for the regulation of a small number, when mankind increased, they found the necessity of an alteration: but as their ideas were too confined to suggest any new mode; as tyranny was not dreaded where it had never been felt; and the violation of rights, which had never

* In the Scriptures we find an instance of a solemn covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, concerning a well of water.

yet existed, could not be guarded against; they contented themselves with that form, to which custom had reconciled them: his authority being extended on a large scale, the head of a family became the sovereign of the state; and despotism fixed her throne in Asia and the eastern world. In those parts we are to search for any knowledge of this kind, as the western quarter was then immersed in the ignorance of primitive barbarity. Even Egypt, the source from whence all arts and sciences are derived, the most refined and polished of kingdoms, was subject to a regal government; whose antiquity, by a series of fabulous dynasties, was carried to a ridiculous height. The republican form was first adopted in Greece; and the aristocracy or democracy, the different modifications of the same original, prevailed according to the disposition of the people by whom they were to be received. The Spartans, sedate, grave, and accustomed from their earliest youth to pay the most implicit deferences to their laws, submitting themselves to an aristocracy of a peculiar kind, which has with more propriety been denominated an oligarchy; for such in effect was the council of the Ephori, which controlled the regal power in such a manner as to render it the mere puppet of their pleasure. The Athenians, lively, impetuous, fond of novelty, and jealous to the extreme of their liberties, rushed into all the turbulence of a licentious democracy. The Roman commonwealth widely differed from Sparta and Athens in the form it assumed after the expulsion of Tarquin. As the exact boundaries between the rights of the patricians and plebeians were not defined with sufficient precision, they proved a source of endless contention; and the cruel treatment which debtors met with from their creditors, more than once reduced the state to the brink of destruction. Upon reflection it seems an unaccountable

circumstance, that a state, which boasted of the liberty of its subjects, and which considered the appellation of a 'Roman citizen,' as the most glorious distinction it could bestow, should permit such an ignominious badge of slavery to be interwoven in the principles of its constitution; thus to expose those very citizens who formed the flower of her legions, to the tyranny of a brutal creditor. The reader will pardon me, if I stop a moment to contemplate this wonderful nation; who, by dint of all the virtues which can adorn a rising state, joined to the most unremitting perseverance, became, from the petty asylum of a few wandering robbers, the mistress of the world; who unnoticed and unobserved, was silently ascending the height she afterward attained; and amidst discords and divisions, which threatened her very existence, arose only more formidable from her fall; or to use the nervous expression of Horace,

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.

Through wounds, through losses, no decay can feel,
Collecting strength and spirit from the steel.—FRANCIS.

This nation from its infancy seemed destined to the sceptre of the world; and by the imperious dignity of its behaviour, to enforce reverence and awe. The judicious Virgil perceived wherein the real glory of his countrymen consisted; and wisely rejecting what could not be claimed as theirs, boldly stamped the characteristic of his nation.

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra,
(Creda equidem) vivos ducent de marmore vultus;
Orabunt causas melius, cælique meatus
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent;
Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
Parcere subjectis, et debellare surperbos.

Let others better mould the running mass
Of metals, and inform the breathing brass;
And soften into flesh a marble face;

Plead better at the bar; describe the skies,
And when the stars descend, and when they rise.
But Rome, 'tis thine alone with awful sway
To rule mankind, and make the world obey;
Disposing peace and war, thy own majestic way.
To tame the proud, the fettered slave to free;
These are imperial arts, and worthy thee.—DRYDEN.

In these lines the invidious assertion included in '*Orabunt causas melius*,' to the prejudice of the truly eloquent Cicero, has been often noticed; and it may be worth remarking, that although Virgil has so freely resigned the superiority in other points, he is silent with respect to poetry. Vanity there arrested his pen, and forbade the confession.—But to return from this digression.

From this short review of the ancient government it may be collected, that neither Greeks nor Romans had any idea of that mixed form, which comprehends the seemingly irreconcilable principles of monarchical despotism, and republican freedom! unless the Kings and Ephori of Sparta may be included in that denomination. The feudal system, which succeeded the downfal of the Roman empire, gave the first rude outlines of the fabric; as appears from the compact between the king and his barons, and the tenures on which they held their fiefs. We here see an acknowledged sovereign, and order of nobility, who stipulate to perform certain services, on consideration of the grant of particular lands and privileges. The king on his side promises to observe these privileges inviolate; and in case of the non-performance of the contract*, the one side has the liberty of seeking redress by force of arms; the other forfeits his fief, as he has not complied with the tenure by which he held it. The nobles,

* There is a remarkable instance of this in the case of the ancient Spanish grandees: vide Dr. Robertson's preface to his History of Charles the Fifth, from whom most of the observations on the feudal system are taken.

after the performance of these services, are totally independent; and the sovereign can be considered in no other light than as the head of a powerful confederacy, united by their common interest. This is only the rude outline of monarchical and aristocratical power. The people were then in such a miserable state of bondage, that so far from claiming any right to the share in the legislature, they were considered by their lords as mere cattle; they had not even the liberty of removing from one country to another, without express permission. After the lapse of some centuries, the king, unable to restrain his factious barons by his own power, perceived the necessity of counterbalancing their influence by an opposite interest. To this politic scheme we owe the institution of free cities, boroughs, and corporations; which, by diffusing the spirit of liberty, were the original cause of dispelling the darkness which hung over Europe for ages; this too seems the first attempt to distinguish the people as a distinct body under a monarchy. To mark the different gradations from the first imperfect sketch to the finished plan might fill a volume. To the reader who wishes to be more amply informed on this interesting subject, the author before mentioned will be a copious source of information. He may convince himself of what has been advanced, by an example existing at this moment; I mean the empire of Germany, whose constitution is still strictly feudal. The emperor is still elective, though the crown has been so long secured to the house of Austria; the different electors and princes of the empire are absolute in their own dominions; and the only places where the people have any influence, are in the imperial or free cities.

But here, as on all other occasions, I should wish to avoid the error into which many ingenious men have fallen, too much refinement. Instead of sur-

veying the transactions of past ages calmly and impartially; instead of placing themselves, as far as they are able, in the same situation, and considering the different passions, which influenced them, and thereby judging of the causes which produced their corresponding effects; they behold them through the medium of the prejudices or principles which education, or the colour of the times they live in have produced, and attribute the refinements of modern times, to the barbarism of the first ages. It is not to be supposed, that when men first paid a voluntary obedience to him, whom they considered as the father of his family, that obedience resulted from a consideration of the necessity of legal subordination; or that when the chieftain of a barbarous nation, and his barons, raised the rude structure of feudal government, they reflected on the balance of power so necessary to the regulation of a well-formed state. The first, by a kind of instinctive veneration obeyed him, whom from his infancy he has been taught to revere as the father of his race; the latter, interested, and uninfluenced by patriotic principles, knew no other motive than the love of plunder and rapine; he fought not for others, but himself; he exacted the price of his toil with unrelenting vigour; and in pursuing, as he thought, the best means to secure his own possessions, he unknowingly laid the foundations of a better institution. From this reasoning it is not to be concluded, that in a more polished period men did not guard their liberties by laws expressly calculated for that purpose. Holland and England are strong instances to the contrary; since the laws of both, were framed at a time, when society was in a more advanced period; and consequently such political refinement might be attributed to them without incurring the charge of absurdity.

From this view we may see, that as* Monarchy may degenerate into Tyranny, Aristocracy into Oligarchy, and Democracy into Anarchy, that Constitution which can unite the various excellences of each without the defects, will approach nearest to perfection.

To expatiate on a subject, which has filled volumes, would be useless; and I only wish to add a few remarks, to the number of those which have been already made. England, from the peculiarity of her constitution, is placed in a very singular situation. We have seen the liberties of the nations around us gradually sinking, whilst our own have as gradually been increased and strengthened, from the very blows which seemed to threaten their destruction; they are not the sickly productions of the moment, but the vigorous offspring of time and wisdom. The kings of France and Spain, by a series of successful efforts, have imposed the yoke of absolute dominion on their subjects; and Sweden has voluntarily resigned her rights: England is at present the only monarchy, where the regal power is under any limitation. In speaking of our constitution, the fault of too much refinement has frequently been incurred, the antiquity of the parliament has been carried beyond its due bounds, even to the Saxon æra: and the constitution supposed to have existed almost in its present form, from the date of the Magna Charta. That famous deed it is true, is the grand foundation on which we have built our system; but in its original intent it only secured the privileges of the barons, without any consideration of the people. The cautious policy of Henry VII. first gave any weight to the commons in this nation; but his imperious son effectually checked their growing influence, and kept them in the most

* Machiavel.

servile subjection: and Elizabeth, who with the pride, had imbibed the despotic principles, of her father, did not allow them a greater latitude. Under the mild and pacific administration of James, the commons acquired a greater degree of importance than they had hitherto been accustomed to; but even then it was not usual to assemble the parliament, as a regular part of the legislature, except when the king demanded any supplies. In the reign of the unfortunate Charles, they assumed a bolder tone, denied the king's power of taxation without their consent, and by the famous petition of rights, insisted on being regularly assembled once in three years. From this era we may date the existence of our constitution in its present form. The limits between the regal prerogative, and popular privileges, were exactly ascertained; the due balance between the three estates of king, lords, and commons, was fixed; and no farther room for alteration or dispute left. The last and finishing stroke was the bill of rights confirmed by William the Third, after the expulsion of James the Second. These rights and privileges it is our fortune to enjoy unimpaired; and may they be transmitted to future ages, as perfect as we have received them.

I have thus endeavoured to give a short analysis of the progress of government, in a manner that appeared to me most natural. To the deep read politician this essay may seem trivial, and its contents superficial; I am conscious that the observations have not the force of novelty, or the depth of reflection; but if I have collected in a narrow compass, what before was scattered through volumes, in a manner that may prove beneficial to my fellow-citizens; if I inspire one patriotic sentiment, or kindle one spark of that laudable ambition, which is the source of all great actions; if any of the future great shall acknowledge, that he is the least indebted to

the assistance and instructions of GREGORY GRIFFIN, my labours are fully compensated.—A

N° 24. MONDAY, APRIL 30, 1787.

An quodcunque facit Mæcenas te quoque verum est?
Whate'er Mæcenas does must thou do too?

IT is a common observation with those who observe at all, that those passions, which under the guidance of a strong mind, are most consistent with the dignity of human nature; when they assume absolute dominion over a weak one, tend most effectually to villify and debase it.

Of these perhaps, speaking comprehensively of its good and evil, there is none so generally beneficial to society as emulation; for there is hardly an eminent character, in whatever line of greatness, but has been originally drawn from indolence and obscurity, by the example of superior excellence; and the hopes of attaining those heights, to which some daring adventurer has previously led the way.

To avoid mentioning the innumerable instances of this, which every day crowd upon our observation, I will rather examine to what pernicious effects this glorious enthusiasm may lead, when operating on a mind incapable of directing it: or intoxicated by habitual success and adulation.

Alexander the Great, whose admiration for the bravery of Achilles, blinded him to the vicious excesses which every where characterize that hero, never sullied his victories more than by his imitation of an action, which the poet has even been censured for attributing to a man in whom he designed to represent the most finished idea of barbarous virtue. At

the siege of Gaza, exasperated at the obstinate resistance of Betis, the Eunuch of Darius, he inhumanly insulted that virtue, which even in an enemy claims respect, by dragging him round those walls he had so gallantly defended; quoting the cruel treatment of Hector, though he had not even the plea, insufficient as it was, which palliates this piece of barbarity in his great model of excellence.

But if we turn with horror from this instance of weakness, we cannot but smile at the ridiculous servility of the famous Pyrrhus, who afterward carried his imitation of Alexander to such lengths, as to affect even his deformities; and we are told, that a happy similarity to his predecessor, in a wry neck, was no uncommon topic of flattery among his courtiers.

When we see men who are held up as the pageants of human grandeur, upon whose decisions, nay almost ideas, depended the revolutions of empires, so subject to the failings of human nature, we cannot be surprised at finding a faithful transcript of the passions by which they have been biassed, in the heroes of our little republic; and a similar imitation of those, whose characters or abilities have procured them the admiration of their fellow-citizens.

When I call it a republic, I speak at random on a subject on which in some future lucubration I may dwell longer; and introduce to the politicians of the great world, a system of government which is consistent with none which the power of legislature has hitherto been able to regulate: a government, which though founded on the law of the strongest, is so tempered with the principles of equity, as to have subsisted for centuries without any material revolution:—an aristocracy of such gradual progression from despotism to slavery, as to render the distance less oppressive, though not less awful:—and honours and offices of state so equally divided, as to

hold out to every individual a certainty of one day enjoying them.

Nor however has this uninterrupted sameness proceeded from a want of geniuses to conduct a revolution; we too have had our Catilines and Clodii, the daring incendiaries of the most threatening commotions; and our De Witts and Barnevelts, the patriotic opposers of illegal oppression. Many a Cooke has been employed in the regulation of our birth-night navy; and the order of a Montem given rise to the most interesting debates in our senate house.

In this, however, as in all other governments, the character of the community will vary with that of the most distinguished members. The Gymnasium, the Mall, the Lyceum, and the Dilettanti, have by turns prevailed, and each produced extraordinary originals, whose imitation has for a time been the ambition of their disciples; till in a few generations it has of itself grown obsolete, or been superseded by some new object of fashionable amusement.

Acanthio was of that sect of philosophers which the generality of mankind term oddities; and by nature formed to answer Democritus's idea of a poet. The mad enthusiasm of genius forced him so far from the centre of common sense, that his character unconsciously comprehended all those singularities which Horace ascribes to the affectation of the Roman poctasters. His beard was not cultivated as the badge of wisdom, or testimony of stoicism; on the contrary, he made frequent attempts to get rid of so unfashionable a companion; and would certainly have effected his purpose, but for the constant interruption of some impertinent idea between the resolution and the operation. When seized with the spouting mania, he gave loose to the rapture of his imagination, in the oratorical artillery of puffs, stamps, and roars, with so formidable an action on his natural crabbed severity of phiz, as frequently to

entertain the spectators, not without some mixture of terror.

It was fortunate for him, when he had full space for the overboilings of this frenzy; but as he was never entirely secure, very dangerous symptoms of it often attacked him in the narrow compass of his apartment. Upon these occasions, a chorus of Rowley seldom subsided without the demolition of a set of china; the bard of Morven frequently furnished a week's work for a carpenter; and the Dircean swan has been known to commit open acts of hostility against his peaceable neighbours of the shelf, till actually checked in his mid career by the seasonable interposition of a prostrate table.

Being one day earnestly engaged in an argument with Plato, he was so enraged at the obstinate insensibility of a mahogany elbow chair, which was the temporary representative of that philosopher, that in the height of his resentment, he sprang forward to enforce conviction by the *argumentum baculinum*, and fell over the object of his vengeance on the floor. Finding himself grievously discomfited by a violent contusion on the forehead, while his hard-hearted antagonist still maintained his point with the same phlegmatic coolness, he began to express his sensations, by dancing round the room, and roaring lustily for wet brown paper, in a yell, between pain, rage, and disappointment. Upon the timely application however of this remedy, a dispute was settled, which might otherwise have terminated in an open rupture.

These, and many other peculiarities, constituted a character of which Soricius is a professed imitator. But unhappily the affected singularity of the latter, has not the excuse of genius, which palliates the capricious eccentricity of the former. In short, he attempts to effect by art, what nature alone can render agreeable; for an oddity is an animal, whose

innate and unconscious qualities are his only recommendation; the moment therefore he has any assumed virtues, he becomes disgusting. Soricius, it is true, has the appearance of absence, but he takes care to inform you that it is real. If you remind him of having forgotten any thing, he will exclaim with a simper, '*he, he, he, laud I am so forgetful!*' but is sure upon search to find it carefully deposited: and if ever he ventures a sousing or a broken shin in support of his character, has always clean linen and plasters in readiness for a thorough repair.

But as no part of an oddity's apparatus is so conducive to his success as his collection of rhapsodies, he has provided himself with a very ample classical budget; and that he may add the recommendation of novelty, has stored it from those treasures of elocution which no dabbler in the art has ever entered on, such as the interesting narrative of Homer's catalogue; the glorious extravagances of Lucan's battles; and the instructive softness of Virgil's directions for sowing wheat, and breeding bullocks. Nay, he has even attempted a higher excellence, and undertaken to model the worn-out trifles of Anacreon and Catullus, into novelty, with the assistance of a heroic deep bass; and to deceive the most competent judges, with Pindar's Olympiads, in a charming piano.

Many such portraits might be drawn, and perhaps from the life, of servile imitation; but I should hope it was sufficiently evident to every one, whose reason will tell him that he is an independent being, that the imitation of errors is the most glaring proof of a weak understanding. And that the affectation of that eccentricity which is allowable in true genius alone, is in any thing below mediocrity, like an attempt at the bold animation of a Raphael in the Saracen's-head; or the venerable gloom of a Salvator, in the foliage of the royal oak.—C.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANTISUPERBUS I would advise to lay down the pen he has so hastily assumed; or if the *scribendi cacoethes* has taken such strong hold of him that he finds that impossible, let him throw his abilities into some other channel, as at present, I fear, he has mistaken their bent. The same hint, taken in time, might save the reputation of his unintelligible associate.

Much as I am obliged to a BARRISTER for his elegant extract, as the circumstances wear an air of truth, and my lucubrations might possibly fall into the hands of the parties, I fear it would too deeply wound the feelings of a distressed family for insertion.

N° 25. MONDAY, MAY 7, 1787.

Interdum populus rectum videt: est ubi peccat.
the people's voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God.—POPE.

PROVERBIAL expressions and received opinions, have usually been considered as an abridgment of national wisdom, and are perhaps the best guides to the character or genius of a people. And it is not improbable, that the extension of this method of inquiry, to the established opinions and received ideas of mankind in general, may lead us to a more perfect and general knowledge of them.

That the mind of man is not framed for happiness, is a principle, of the truth of which perhaps the most certain criterion is its popularity.

At the revival of learning, the idea of gradual and

progressive degeneracy obtained very strongly: and whether it contributed in any measure to the study of the ancients, or, what is more probable, was derived from the inferiority visible in their imitators, its prevalence was unlimited, and its authority unquestioned. How far a servile reverence and scrupulous imitation of antiquity is compatible with the efforts of learning and genius, may be seen in the attempts of an age, whose diligence was unequalled, and whose genius ours has no right to suppose inferior to her own. But it may be objected that the qualities of the heart, if not those of the head, may be improved by a converse with antiquity; that if the science of barbarous nations is rude, their morality at least is pure. To fall into errors authorized by the example of a superior, has frequently afforded a despicable gratification to men of inferior abilities; and the scrupulous stickler for obsolete antiquity, may be pleased to find his error common to the ablest politicians of declining Rome. That great empire in a state of decay, has been aptly characterized by her historian, as the theatre in which the scenes of a more virtuous age were acted over again; but without the principle or spirit of the real personages. This was the error of a physician, who would treat an infirm patient as if he was in youth and health, as the only means of restoring him to both; and the only circumstances which render the former folly the more excusable, are its greater frequency, and that appearance of earnestness, which the voluntary assumption of more rigid manners carries with it. Perhaps, the result of all serious inquiries on this subject will be, that, in the moral, as well as the physical world, there is a correspondent propriety in every member, as far as its relation to the rest is considered, and that the manners of every age and nation have as much propriety in their designation, as the passions peculiar to the different

periods of life, and the instinctive qualities of the animal world.

The striking analogy which subsists between the two first, may afford matter for a digression, which my readers will the more readily pardon, as it arises immediately from the subject, contributes in some measure to illustrate it, and throws light on a similitude whose leading features seem to have struck every observer; but whose more minute corresponding peculiarities have never been traced with any degree of accuracy. The first attempts of a rising state, struggling into eminence and observation, the strength of an established constitution, and the weakness of declining empire, have so strong an analogy to the first efforts of infancy, the confirmed vigour of maturity, and the debility of age, that expressions adopted into one from the other are hardly considered as metaphorical; and are to be met with in styles the most unadorned, or even the flow of common conversation.

The progress of national refinement, considered as analogous to the improvement of personal taste, may perhaps furnish a less trite, and more interesting, subject of discussion.

The objects with which children are most delighted, are such as strike most forcibly upon the senses; the simplest tunes, the sweetest tastes, a fanciful association of the most gaudy colours, are most agreeable to our infancy; and a fondness for similar objects, is a certain indication of a national taste in the first stages of cultivation; an implicit credulity in what they hear, and the utmost deference to the authority of what they read, is another leading characteristic of childhood; insomuch, that a system of education, which confines its pupils to ignorance, has been grounded on the fear of imbibing early and mistaken opinions. The grand

and fundamental error which makes this system entirely impracticable, is the supposition, that the implicit adherence to superior authority was to be destroyed, not by the researches of Learning, but the advances of age. Unprejudiced ignorance is always diffident; and to this cause are to be attributed the credulity of childhood, and that readiness with which a barbarous age receives the opinions of a superior genius.

A mind too ignorant or too indolent for reflection, is pleased to repose itself under the shadow of some great authority; and to adopt a set of dogmas implicitly, without hesitation or inquiry. Hence, in our earliest moral writers, almost every sentence is prefaced with an authority for the sentiment it contains; and in Spain, a country some centuries behind the rest of Europe in point of taste and learning, the same species of writing still subsists.

Of all the periods of human life, the passions and opinions of youth are perhaps the most remarkable; the mind perceives a sensible dilation of its faculties, becomes jealous of an unprejudiced freedom of inquiry, and ashamed of that implicit deference it had formerly entertained for the opinions of others. New systems are daily raised, inveterate prejudices examined and rejected, and we flatter ourselves for a while with the sufficiency of private observation, and unassisted endeavours; the ardour of innovation at length subsides, and we discover in time that a credulous attention to the opinions of others, and a blind confidence in our own, are equally insufficient for the pursuits of truth and wisdom.

If we should trace back the progress of natural science, to the first dawn that dispelled the clouds of prejudice and error, we should discover a number of circumstances, parallel to those in the improvement of personal knowledge; the immediate rejection of

all received opinions, and the readiness with which a new system is embraced, are circumstances common to both, and highly characteristic.

After the existence of a similitude between the progress of personal and of popular taste has been proved, it would be needless to vindicate the propriety of either; I shall therefore confine myself to an examination of the reasons from which an idea of modern inferiority has arisen.

Man, though constantly in pursuit of happiness, so seldom appears to be in possession of his object, that his constant failure of success has been attributed to a supposed defect in his formation; a principle that offers to its followers so compendious a protection from the feelings of conscious humiliation, and the agonies of conviction and remorse, could hardly fail of being popular; the invention of lenitives, similar in their effect, though not equally comprehensive in their operation, had long employed the invention of mankind. The narratives of our first adventurers were filled with descriptions of more favoured realms, where the manners of patriarchal life were supposed to exist among a people unenvied, and undisturbed; in a simplicity as happy as it was innocent: while the volumes of our earliest moralists were filled with the idea of progressive degeneracy, against which, as it was impossible to succeed, so was it useless to contend.

The discoveries of navigation, and the lights of reviving learning, were for a time insufficient to convince our ancestors, that there had not been a period in which men were wiser, or a land in which they were happier, than themselves. The visionary worlds of Bacon and Sir Thomas More, have a situation assigned them, in some part of the globe then unknown; and Spenser's lines, in which he obviates any objections that might arise to the actual existence of 'his delightful lond of Faëry,' are so

curious for the subject, and method of reasoning, as to deserve citation.

Right-well I wote most mighty Soueraine,
That all this famous antique history,
Of some th' aboundance of an idle braine
Will iudged be, and painted forgery,
Rather than matter of iust memory;
Sith none, that breatheth living aire, does know,
Where is this happy lond of Faëry,
Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show,
But vouch antiquities, which no body can know.

But let that man with better sense advise,
That to the world least part to vs is red:
And daily how through hardy enterprize,
Many great regions are discouered,
Which to late age were never mentioned.
Who euer heard of the Indian Peru?
Or who in venturous vessell measured
The Amazons huge river now found trew?
Or fruitfullest Virginia who did euer vew?

Yet all these were, when no man did them know;
Yet haue from wisest ages hidden beene:
And later times things more unknown shall show.
Why thed should witless man so much misweene
That nothing, is, but that which he hath seene?
What if within the moons faire shining sphere?
What if in every other star unseene
Of other worldes he happily should heare?
He wonder would much more, yet such to some appeare.

An argument of actual existence of a country, derived from the impossibility of demonstrating the contrary, was so singular, that I could not resist the temptation of offering it to my readers. These visionary obstacles to perfection did not vanish before the morning of science; on the contrary, from some circumstances before observed, they seem to have gained additional terrors. Milton himself was under apprehensions, that his poem was produced too late for admiration, if not for excellence; and our ancestors were long content to believe themselves born in an age too late, or a climate too cold, for the attainment of perfection. In the first it will

be sufficient to observe, that countries, the least polished by literature, or civilized by commercial intercourse, have always been found the most resolute assertors of their ancient dignity; a cause to which we must attribute the prolix catalogue of Scottish monarchs, and the Milesian colony of the Irish antiquaries. The second, as the malice of my inquiry does not war with the dead, I shall not examine; the very existence of such an opinion may in time become doubtful.

There are perhaps few popular opinions, so repugnant as the former to truth and reason, which may not be traced to their origin, in an inventive mind, occupied rather in palliating its omissions by ingenious excuses, than in avoiding them by a determined activity; and the most specious are seldom recurred to but as the lenitives of reflection, on the painful retrospect of wasted time, and abilities misapplied.

N° 26. MONDAY, MAY 14, 1787.

Fabula nullius veneris, sine pondere, et arte.—Hor.
A silly story, without weight, or art.

Novel-writing has by some late authors been aptly enough styled the younger sister of Romance. A family likeness indeed is very evident; and in their leading features, though in the one on a more enlarged, and in the other on a more contracted scale, a strong resemblance is easily discoverable between them.

An eminent characteristic of each is Fiction; a quality which they possess, however, in very different degrees. The fiction of romance is restricted by

no fetters of reason, or of truth; but gives a loose to lawless imagination, and transgresses at will the bounds of time and place, of nature and possibility. The fiction of the other, on the contrary, is shackled with a thousand restraints; is checked in her most rapid progress by the barriers of reason; and bounded in her most excursive flights by the limits of probability.

To drop our metaphors: we shall not indeed find in novels, as in romances, the hero sighing respectfully at the feet of his mistress, during a ten years' courtship in a wilderness; nor shall we be entertained with the history of such a tour, as that of Saint George; who mounts his horse one morning at Cappadocia, takes his way through Mesopotamia, then turns to the right into Illyria, and so, by way of Grecia and Thracia, arrives in the afternoon in England. To such glorious violations as these of time and place, romance writers have an exclusive claim. Novelists usually find it more convenient to change the scene of courtship from a desert to a drawing-room; and far from thinking it necessary to lay a ten years' siege to the affections of their heroine, they contrive to carry their point in an hour or two; as well for the sake of enhancing the character of their hero, as for establishing their favourite maxim of love at first sight; and their hero, who seldom extends his travels beyond the turnpike-road, is commonly content to choose the safer, though less expeditious, conveyance of a post-chaise, in preference to such a horse as that of Saint George.

But, these peculiarities of absurdity alone excepted, we shall find, that the novel is but a more modern modification of the same ingredients which constitute the romance; and that a recipe for the one may be equally serviceable for the composition of the other.

A Romance (generally speaking) consists of a

number of strange events, with a hero in the middle of them; who, being an adventurous knight, wades through them to one grand design, namely, the emancipation of some captive princess, from the oppression of a merciless giant; for the accomplishment of which purpose he must set at nought the incantations of the caitiff magician; must scale the ramparts of his castle; and baffle the vigilance of the female dragon, to whose custody his heroine is committed.

Foreign as they may at first sight seem from the purposes of a novel, we shall find, upon a little examination, that these are in fact the very circumstances upon which the generality of them are built; modernized indeed in some degree, by the transformations of merciless giants into austere guardians, and of she-dragons into maiden aunts. We must be contented also that the heroine, though retaining her tenderness, be divested of her royalty; and in the hero we must give up the knight-errant for the accomplished fine gentleman.

Still, however, though the performers are changed, the characters themselves remain nearly the same. In the guardian we trace all the qualities which distinguish his ferocious predecessor; substituting only, in the room of magical incantations, a little plain cursing and swearing; and the maiden aunt retains all the prying vigilance, and suspicious malignity, in short, every endowment but the claws, which characterize her romantic counterpart. The hero of a novel has not indeed any opportunity of displaying his courage in the scaling of a rampart, or his generosity in the deliverance of enthralled multitudes; but as it is necessary that a hero should signalize himself by both these qualifications, it is usual, to manifest the one by climbing the garden wall, or leaping the park-paling, in defiance of 'steel-traps and spring-guns;' and the other, by

flinging a crown to each of the post-boys, on alighting from his chaise and four.

In the article of interviews, the two species of composition are pretty much on an equality; provided only, that they are supplied with a '*quantum sufficit*' of moonlight, which is indispensably requisite; it being the etiquette for the moon to appear particularly conscious on these occasions. For the adorer, when permitted to pay his vows at the shrine of his divinity, custom has established in both cases a pretty universal form of prayer.

Thus far the writers of novel and romance seem to be on a very equal footing; to enjoy similar advantages, and to merit equal admiration. We are now come to a very material point, in which romance has but slender claims to comparative excellence; I mean the choice of names and titles. However lofty and sonorous the names of Amadis and Orlando; however tender and delicate may be those of Zorayda and Roxana, are they to be compared with the attractive alliteration, the seducing softness, of Lydia Lovemore, and Sir Harry Harlowe; of Frederic Freelove, and Clarissa Clearstarch? Or can the simple 'Don Belianis, of Greece,' or the 'Seven Champions of Christendom,' trick out so enticing a title-page, and awaken such pleasing expectations, as the 'Innocent Adultery,' the 'Tears of Sensibility,' or the 'Amours of the Count de D*****, and L——y ——————?'

It occurs to me while I am writing this, that as there has been of late years so considerable a consumption of names and titles, as to have exhausted all the efforts of invention, and ransacked all the alliterations of the alphabet; it may not be amiss to inform all novelists, male and female, who under these circumstances must necessarily wish, with Falstaff, to know 'where a commodity of good names may be bought,' that at my warehouse for

wit, I have laid in a great number of the above articles, of the most fashionable and approved patterns. Ladies may suit themselves with a vast variety, adapted to every composition of the kind; whether they may choose them to consist of two adjectives only, as the 'Generous Inconstant,'—the 'Fair Fugitive,'—or the name of a place, as 'Grogram Grove,' 'Gander Green,' or whether they prefer the still newer method of coupling persons and things with an 'or,' as 'Louisa; or, the Purling Stream,'—'Estafina; or, the Abbey in the Dale,'—'Eliza; or, the Little House on the Hill.' Added to these, I have a complete assortment of names for every individual that can find a place in a novel; from the Belviles and Beverleys of high life, to the Humphreyses and Gubbinses of low; suited to all ages, ranks, and professions; to persons of every stamp, and characters of every denomination.

In painting the scenes of low life, the novel again enjoys the most decisive superiority. Romance indeed sometimes makes use of the grosser sentiments, and less refined affections of the squire and the confidant, as a foil to the delicate adoration, the platonic purity, which make the love of the hero, and suits the sensibility of his mistress. But where shall we find such a thorough knowledge of nature, such an insight into the human heart, as is displayed by our novelists; when, as an agreeable relief from the insipid sameness of polite insincerity, they condescend to portray in coarse colours, the workings of more genuine passions in the bosom of Dolly, the dairy-maid, or Hannah, the house-maid?

When on such grounds, and on a plan usually very similar to the one I have here endeavoured to sketch, are founded by far the greater number of those novels, which crowd the teeming catalogue of a circulating library; is it to be wondered at, that they are sought out with such avidity, and run

through with such delight, by all those (a considerable part of my fellow-citizens) who cannot resist the impulse of curiosity, or withstand the allurements of a title-page? Can we be surprised, that they look forward, with expecting eagerness, to that inundation of delicious nonsense, with which the press annually overflows; replete as it is with stories without invention, anecdotes without novelty, observations without aptness, and reflections without morality?

Under this description come the generality of these performances. There are, no doubt, a multitude of exceptions. The paths which a Fielding and a Richardson have trodden, must be sacred. Were I to profane these by impertinent criticism, I might with justice be accused of avowed enmity to wit; of open apostacy from true feeling, and true taste.

But let me hope to stand excused from the charge of presumption, if even here I venture some observations, which I am confident must have occurred to many; and to which almost every body, when reminded of them, will be ready to give a hearty concurrence.

Is not the novel of Tom Jones, however excellent a work of itself, generally put too early into our hands, and proposed too soon to the imitation of children? That it is a character drawn faithfully from nature, by the hand of a master, most accurately delineated, and most exquisitely finished, is indeed indisputable. But is it not also a character, in whose shades the lines of right and wrong, of propriety and misconduct, are so intimately blended, and softened into each other, as to render it too difficult for the indiscriminating eye of childhood to distinguish between rectitude and error? Are not its imperfections so nearly allied to excellence, and does not the excess of its good qualities bear so

strong an affinity to imperfection, as to require a more matured judgment, a more accurate penetration, to point out the line where virtue ends and vice begins? The arguments urged in opposition to this are, that it is a faithful copy of nature.—Undoubtedly it is—but is nature to be held up to the view of childhood, in every light, however unamiable; to be exhibited in every attitude, however unbecoming? the hero's connexion with Miss Seagrim, for instance, and the supposed consequences of it are very natural no doubt; are they therefore objects worthy of imitation? But that a child must admire the character, is certain; that he should wish to imitate what he admires, follows of course; and that it is much more easy to imitate faults than excellences, is an observation too trite, I fear, not to be well founded. A character virtuous and amiable in the aggregate, but vicious in particular parts, is much more dangerous to a mind, prone to imitation, as that of youth naturally is, than one wicked and vicious in the extreme. The one is an open assault of an avowed enemy, which every one has judgment to see, and consequently fortitude to resist; the other is the treacherous attack of an insidious invader; who makes the passions his agents to blind the judgment, and bribes the understanding to betray the heart.—Such is the character of Jones. He interests our affections at the moment that his actions revolt against our ideas of propriety; nor can even his infidelity to Sophia, however ungrateful, nor his connexion with Lady Bellastone, though perhaps the most degrading situation in which human nature can be viewed, materially lessen him in our esteem and admiration. On these grounds therefore, though there cannot be a more partial admirer of the work itself, I cannot hesitate a moment to consider that 'faultless monster' Sir Charles Grandison, whose insipid uniformity of goodness it

is fashionable to decry, far the more preferable to be held up to a child as an object of imitation. The only objection urged to this is, that Grandison is too perfect to be imitated with success. And to what does this argument amount? truly this, it tends to prove, that an imitator cannot come up to his original; consequently, the surest way to become a Jones, is to aim at being a Grandison: for according to that argument, let a man rate his virtues at the highest price, and the natural bias of his passions will make him bate something of his valuation. —Hence therefore the character of Grandison is assuredly the properer pattern of the two. An attempt at the imitation of that, must necessarily be productive of some attainment in virtue. The character of Jones can neither operate as an incitement to virtue, or a discouragement from vice. He is too faulty for the one, and too excellent for the other. Even his good qualities must, on an undiscerning mind, have a bad effect; since, by fascinating its affections, they render it blind to his foibles; and the character becomes the more dangerous, in proportion as it is the more amiable.

But to return from this long digression, to the consideration of novels in general. Some of my fellow-citizens may perhaps conjecture, that I have affected to undervalue them from interested motives; and that I would wean them from their study of them, for the purpose only of increasing the demand for my own lucubrations. To wipe off any suspicions of the kind, and to prove to them that my only motives are a view to their advantage, I promise, in the course of a few numbers, to point out to the observation, and recommend to the perusal of professed novel readers, a set of books, which they now treat with undeserved contempt, but from which I will prove, that they may derive at least as much entertainment, and certainly much more useful instruc-

tion, than from the dull details of unmeaning sentiment, and insipid conversation; of incidents the most highly unnatural, and events the most uninteresting.—B.

N° 27. MONDAY, MAY 21, 1787.

Virtutem incolumen odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.—HORACE.

Though living virtue we despise,
We follow her when dead with envious eyes.—FRANCIS.

IT has generally been the fate of illustrious merit, to be persecuted and reviled; neglected and oppressed, when living; and exposed to the derision of the ignorant, and the wanton insults of the unfeeling. The brave has been stigmatized as a coward, the patriot has been accused of treachery, the philosopher of atheism, the poet and the historian of plagiarism, infidelity, and partiality. When dead, it has been loaded with superfluous honours, and the powers of flattery and panegyric exhausted to decorate its tomb. A patron has given a sumptuous burial to him, whom living he suffered to starve in a garret, or rot in a jail; and a nation has erected a monument of her gratitude over the remains of a statesman or a general, whom she had exiled from his country, or meanly deprived of the just reward of his exertions and abilities. The tide, when too late, takes a different turn; and as extremes are always opposite, a blind adoration is paid to the memory of him who not long before was the object of public hatred or contempt. Let us endeavour to trace to its source the cause of such an impolitic mode of treatment, which seems to throw such an effectual damp on the

ardour of ambition; and check in its rise, that desire of glory and emulation of an illustrious predecessor, which is the only source of great actions.

It has been observed, that time alone can decide the degree of estimation to which every man is entitled; the partialities or prejudices of contemporaries exalt or depress every virtue, heighten or palliate every fault, and represent every action in the light that is most favourable to their different purposes of panegyric or invective. It is difficult to find the candid historian of his own times, who, if deeply concerned in the transactions he records, will relate the narrative of contending factions without prejudice or bias; and he who expects to find an impartial account in a Clarendon, will most probably search for that which has never yet existed. By comparing the opposite characters of the same man, and making a due allowance for the exaggerations on either side; by judiciously blending the two extremes, and considering the effects which his measures have had on posterity; his true character is to be delineated. Few possess such clear heads and cool passions, as to resist the torrent of prejudice and party which assails them; and as there is no man who has not sometimes erred in his conduct, to this, as well as to other causes, is the ungrateful treatment of great men to be ascribed. It is the business of malice to point out this error, and mankind is too prone secretly to wish the downfal of those, whose abilities have raised them above the common level. To us who judge coolly at a distance, whose passions are not immediately interested in the cause, it is a subject of astonishment, that men could ever have been so blind to their own interests, as to have neglected or ill treated the worthy and the great, at the instigation of the profligate and unprincipled; it is an infatuation which is not to be accounted for, unless we consult he

emotions of our own hearts. Can the heart fairly say, that it has never conceived a prejudice against any person, either from the principles it has been educated in, from some misrepresentation of any action or speech, or some personal pique? Has it never, from any of these motives, felt itself inclined to gratify this malice, though conscious of the virtues against which it is exerted? These, it is true, are principles, mean, base, and contracted, which it is our duty to root out: but such is the frailty of nature, that they always have maintained, and I am afraid always will maintain, an undue influence. I do not mean to vindicate such treatment on these grounds, but merely to account for the causes of it.

The great, by the superiority of their abilities, depress and restrain the advancement of others who are hastening to the same goal; and who are equally desirous, though not equally capable, of attaining the same heights. These either consider them as obstacles to their own promotion, whom they must remove; or, in the fury of blasted ambition, endeavour to revenge themselves on the supposed author of their disappointments. In a democratical state, the multitude are the general instruments of their hatred: by a dexterous application to their fears and passions; to their fears, in suggesting, that the influence which the glory and splendid actions of an individual has conferred on him is dangerous to the whole, and that his great authority has inspired him with designs destructive of the common weal; to their passions, by reviving the memory and magnifying the heinousness of every petty incident, or unguided speech; and by a malicious perversion of every little action, they inflame the giddy populace to the persecution of those, whom they ought to revere as their guardians and protectors. Men of the first abilities, as conscious of their powers, frequently have not that condescension of manners so neces-

sary in a popular state. Those trivial events, which it is beneath the dignity of history to preserve, have, I doubt not, often contributed to decide the fate of the patriot or general. We who have never experienced the haughty demeanour of Coriolanus, the rough reproof of Cato, and whose rise the abilities of a Cicero have never impeded, or his vanity never offended, pay the due tribute of admiration to these illustrious men; we acknowledge their merits, and admire the wisdom of their conduct, but have never felt the inconveniences of their defects.

The human mind in general is not sensible of the benefits it enjoys, till it has felt the opposite inconveniences; as the body knows not the invaluable blessings of health, till it has experienced the miseries of disease. Thus in a state, the short-sighted multitude have not a proper esteem for the value of an able statesman, till fatal experience has convinced them of his worth; it is in times of real danger that real merit gains its due authority: hence the deep policy of Augustus, who affected a wish to retire from the fatigues of state, that by the subsequent confusion, the Romans might have a deeper sense of the blessings of his regular administration.

Thus far on the rewards of public merit.—Let us now consider the fate of the literary and philosophical world. That the boldnes sand novelty of opinions in natural or moral philosophy, should often draw down persecution on the heads of those who first ventured to maintain them; that Socrates should have been charged with atheism, or that the bigoted superstition of the Catholics should have imprisoned Galileo, is not so surprising; but I cannot assign an adequate cause for the neglect or oppression of literary merit: though it is a melancholy fact, that in all ages, literature, and poetry in particular, has been exposed to poverty, and all its attendant miseries. That the same envy which

banished the statesman, might in a smaller circle influence the breasts of the rivals for poetic or learned fame; or that the snarling critic should wish to expose every little blemish, or decry every beauty, to gratify his own impotent malice, is naturally to be expected; but that the powerful and rich should suffer such abilities to pine in obscurity, is to me an inexplicable mystery.

The poet impedes not their ambition, hinders not their advancement to the highest honours; on the contrary, he is the most proper, and I think gratitude would make him the most willing, to celebrate the laudable ambition, and the well-earned honours, of his protector and his patron. Not that the fulsome language of dedication can crown the unworthy head with real glory. The ear is disgusted with the venal flattery of Boileau to Louis; but the manly address of Pope to Bolingbroke, reflects mutual honour on both parties: to such an address, flattery and venality would be imputed by ignorance alone; it is the abuse of dedication only, which has brought it into disrepute, since, in its original intention, nothing could be more equitable, than that the works of genius should be inscribed to him, to whose fostering care they probably owed their rise.

There is however one species of poetry, which either stands less in need of protection, or from its subject ensures itself more immediate success. The man who has no relish for the sublime of the epic, or the terrible of tragedy, will enter into the spirit of a pointed satire! fear also often extorts that protection to the satirist, which liberality refused. The famous Aretine boasted, that he not only kept all the European sovereigns, but even the sultan himself, in dread of his pen.

It may be worth remarking, that painting has escaped the general fate of her sister art. The greatest painters have been universally honoured

when living, and admired when dead. From what singular circumstance can this peculiarity originate? Is it, that this art, so immediately addressing itself to the senses, we are less liable to be misled and prejudiced by the opinion of others? It is not in every body's power to determine, whether a poet has borrowed a thought from another, either from his not having seen the works of the poet from whom the thought is said to have been borrowed, or his ignorance of the language in which he wrote; we must therefore in some measure rely on the sagacity and fidelity of the critic for the charge of plagiarism. Every body cannot judge whether the plan of the poem is original or well conducted, or whether the historian relates his facts with accuracy and impartiality; as every body has not leisure to inform himself of the rules for the conduct of poetry, or to examine the authorities whence the historian derives his information. In these points therefore, and others which depend on the intellectual faculties, we must again trust to the critic; and the interest he may have in decrying the works of an author, from envy, personal pique, or other motives, may in some measure account for the temporary neglect of those works: but in those articles which address themselves to the senses, we are our own judges; we are all qualified to decide on what pleases our taste, though that taste perhaps may be false. We need not depend on critic judgment to determine, whether a couplet is harmonious or not; and we need not wait for the decision of the connoisseur, to inform us whether a figure is bold and animated, or the colouring just and natural. It is true, that the critic is an abler judge of the refinements of poetry, the machinery, and other parts, which depend upon skill and judgment; and the connoisseur of the due proportion, the effects of light and shade, the perspective, and nicer subtleties of

painting; but still the less skilful and casual observer, is competent to form his opinion on the grand outline of the whole.

It is to be supposed, that there are the same temptations to depress a rising painter, as an eminent poet; but fortunately for the former, he is not exposed to the same disadvantages as the latter. He cannot be accused of obtruding upon the public the works of others as his own; nor is he liable to a spurious copy of his works, by which he may be deprived of the just reward of his labours. Many who have not leisure to peruse a poem, can spare an hour to examine a picture; and to determine the merit of one, requires a less exertion of the mind than of the other. Though the price of paintings is comparatively so enormous to that of books, yet as most large collections are open to the public at no expense, numbers have examined, and are good judges of, merit in this art, who do not possess a single piece of their own; an advantage which writers are deprived of. Even that scarcity which enhances the value of every thing, contributes to this; as it is beyond a doubt, that good books are more numerous than good paintings, we may esteem them the more, as more difficult to be procured. By the value of paintings, an artist may often acquire such a sum by a single picture, as an author cannot by the sale of a whole work; by this means being raised above want, he is not under the fatal necessity of harassing his abilities to procure a daily subsistence. Since portrait painting has been so much in vogue, this art, by flattering our vanity, tempts us to encourage it; and surely that vanity will not permit us to deny the abilities of an artist, when those abilities have been exerted to gratify it. A Reynolds may give grace and dignity to fifty insipid faces in the course of a year; though a poet would find it difficult in his dedications, to furnish

half the number with virtues, as imaginary as the graces in the countenance of the former. But to return,

This review of the unmerited treatment of the illustrious, seems calculated to damp the ardour of those, who even now are panting for fame and glory. Far be it from me to attempt to check one generous emotion, to stifle one spark of rising ambition. Upon those who have a taste for true glory, and strength of mind sufficient to encounter the dangers incident to the pursuit of it, this consideration will have no influence; they will know what they have to encounter, and despise the efforts of that envy, over which their triumph is certain. It is better surely that they should be forewarned of the perils of their undertakings, and not to be elated with the hopes of an immediate success, in the pursuit of which they will meet certain disappointment; and in the despair of which disappointment, they may relinquish their hopes at the moment they have surmounted the difficulties they had to struggle with. Let them remember, that persecution, though it has often been the lot, is not the necessary consequence, of merit. It is the boast of England that she has not only raised the monument to Wolfe or Chatham when dead, but also acknowledged and rewarded their virtues when living.—A.

N° 28. MONDAY, MAY 28, 1787.

Verbum verbo expressum.—TERENCE.
Translated word for word.

AMONG the several fields which lie open to my fellow-citizens, for the exercise and display of their respective abilities, there is none which seems so

generally disregarded as the translation of the classics: whether from its being considered as a relief from the perpetual exercise of the fancy; or from a contempt of excelling in a branch of learning which carries with it no mark of distinction.

I shall therefore make it my endeavour to point out a few of the peculiar advantages, which a strict attention to its niceties may be of, in giving the last polish to a classical education. If considered on a general scale, it is undoubtedly the medium through which ancient literature gains a general introduction to modern taste; and as the mere interpretation of an author's words, without conveying his spirit, nay, as far as a similarity of idiom will allow, his peculiarities of style, tends only to convey to the mind of the reader a disgust for classical writings, by an insipid copy of an expressive original; it is no easy task to introduce Patroclus chiming a porker, or Achates lighting a fire, with that majesty which should attend a hero even in the menial offices of cook and scullion.

The composition of Latin verse has always been the characteristic of Eton; and though it has frequently been attacked as too superficial an accomplishment, to be held up as the first object, it is certain, that without it, the elegances of the language are never to be attained; and the very pronunciation is often erroneous from ignorance of accent and quantity. The archives of our state are filled with the first efforts of expanding genius; and so profusely bountiful is this poetic mania, that there is not a cubic foot in father Thames, but is so ornamented with Naiads, as to force some of them up the neighbouring ditches, for the accommodation of the majority; nor a tree in our *campus martius*, but has at least its brace of Dryads, though there is not a single oak among them. Nay, the learned compiler of the Musæ Etonensis, has in its preface,

purely for the amusement of passers-by, crammed more poets of all sorts and sizes, into a bench, which a dozen starveling sonneteers might fill with ease, than any nine muses in the world could take care of at once.

A study of this kind, as requiring more genius than judgment, more fancy than application, may be justly supposed more congenial to the pursuits of youth. It is not therefore with an idea of supporting the one against the other, that I have undertaken the defence of translation; but to prove, that while it is an amusement not unworthy of genius, it is an employment of the highest utility to persevering industry.

Genius is naturally sympathetic; and so sensitive are the powers of a lively fancy, that wherever we meet with a transcript of our own ideas of perfection, we insensibly glide into the spirit which gave birth to them, and almost compose as we copy. A man of boisterous passions will kindle at the character of an Achilles; a humorist will feel a peculiar delight in the sallies of an Aristophanes or a Foote; and a cynic grind his teeth over the strong misanthropy of a Lucian or a Swift. What the imagination thus cherishes, it will naturally endeavour to bring home to its own ideas; and so far does this often carry us, that I will venture to affirm, that there are few attentive readers of foreign writings, who do not in thought translate every striking idea, as it occurs.

There is besides, a higher gratification reserved for our curiosity than the comprehension of a favourite author. We have by a closer attention to the niceties of idiom, an opportunity of observing what analogy subsists between the languages and characters of nations: and what a strong, though to the vulgar eye invisible link, runs through the fundamental principles of all languages, notwithstanding

the difference of manner, age, and all the contingencies which have contributed to their formation.

To the man to whom amusement, in competition with knowledge, is a very secondary object, this employment has, by the most able writers on the subject, been recommended; not only as a more effectual, but a more easy method of obtaining a knowledge of language, than grammatical theory, or even practical observation, can give. And there can be very little doubt, but that as we are originally taught to form our ideas in our native tongue, any thing which is brought nearest to its level, will be the most likely to adhere to our memories, and be rendered most familiar to our conceptions.

But notwithstanding a general similarity, there will still be a peculiar characteristic to every language; and many writers are so interwoven with the genius of their native tongue, as to sink under a translation, notwithstanding the united efforts of learning and genius; and like the tender exotic, when removed from the genial influence of its own soil and climate, to lose their natural vigour, and fade into a vapid insipidity. Tully, even by the sacrifice of his own harmonious flow of language, could not entirely preserve the chaste severity of Aristotle in a Roman habit; Tacitus is no Englishman; and a late attempt to frenchify Shakspeare met with the ridicule it deserved.

The chief excellence of Paterculus consists in drawing characters; and so great a master was he considered by the great Clarendon, that he is said to have made him his historical model, and adopted him as the constant companion of his leisure hours. Strong figures and expressive conciseness are the characteristics of his writings; but there is a quaintness in his points, which the English language is not always equal to.—The elegance of Pliny, so genteelly introduced to an English acquaintance by

Mr. Melmoth, cannot but be striking to every classical reader. Yet a man of genius, who shall find a translation flow from his pen with that ease so remarkable in the original, might often be at a loss for expression in the concluding sentence, from the quick turn which distinguishes that author; and resembles rather the point of the epigrammatist, than the unrestrained negligence of the letter-writer.

As the most diffused writers are universally most adapted to change of language, it is remarkable, that the works of Cicero have been only partially translated by men qualified for such an undertaking. His rhetorical, and more particularly his philosophical disquisitions, the interesting picture of the efforts of reason unassisted by revelation, are still confined to the admiration of the learned world.

The characters of these writers I have cursorily touched upon, as being those which are most familiar to the pens of my fellow-citizens; and to the junior part of them, whose method of study is not yet fixed, I should wish to recommend this method as the most efficacious introduction to classical knowledge. And now, good-natured reader, that thou mayst see with myself what an unpardonable offence, in the moral, as well as the literary world, is a negligent translation, I will point out to thee one instance where the mistakes of a single expression has given rise to a more barbarous murder, than ever graced the frontispiece of a Newgate calendar.

Those laudable promoters of Christian merriment (as themselves profess), Sternhold and Hopkins, either originally tempted by the text which they have adopted for their motto, to torture poor David into doggerel rhyme; or pleased to conceal so inhuman a deed under such unquestionable authority; refer us to the advice of an inspired writer for their justification. And as psalm-singing is there prescribed to those who are light of heart, they have

taken upon them to provide ample entertainment for all his majesty's Christian subjects who are inclined to be tuneful.

The passage in the original language stands thus;

Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν; προσευχέσθω: εὐθυμεῖ τις; ψαλλέτω. Epist. Jac. c. 5. v. 13.

This probably is not the expression which would have been made use of, had the apostle intended to characterize sacred music, as there are other words more peculiarly adapted to such a meaning; and this is by the Greek authors promiscuously used for any sort of song; and among them by Anacreon, whose lyre was seldom tuned to psalmody, but in honour of deities whose worship did not admit of the serious or sublime. It is probable, therefore, that this expression refers only to the effect which harmony is known to produce, in softening the extravagance of joy, as well as the pangs of affliction; and that this may be ranked among those many errata, which in some measure pervert the original intention of these inimitable writings; undoubtedly calculated to unite a simplicity adapted to the meanest capacities, with an elegance capable of pleasing the most refined.—C.

N° 29. MONDAY, JUNE 4, 1787.

——————— Vir bonus est quis?
The good man is a quiz.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'MR. GREGORY GRIFFIN,

'I FIND, most unfortunately for myself, that I come under the denomination of a quiz. As it is your

peculiar province to apply the lash to the little world out of the library, it will be totally unnecessary to offer an apology for this letter, which it is my most earnest request, may be circulated, especially through the lower school, with all possible expedition.

'But before I proceed, it may be thought necessary to give some description of a figure which my own conscience but too frequently informs me is not, at first sight, by any means agreeable.

'I am now forty-nine years of age, and measure four feet eight inches in height. My usual dress is a dark wig without powder, a round gold laced hat, a light blue coat and waistcoat, a pair of black everlasting breeches, and a large muslin neckcloth, which, indeed, has lately been adopted by, and seems the constant ornament of, the macaronies of the age.

'In my childhood the nurse who took care, or rather who did not take care of me, let master Jacob (for that is my Christian name) fall upon the fender, which circumstance she, of course, concealed from my parents. Some time elapsed before the discovery was made, and all medical assistance was then ineffectual. The family surgeon looked very grave, and emphatically pronounced that the bones were distorted, and, although I was not yet *an adult*, it was by no means a recent injury; and there would be a *gibbosity*, a preternatural incurvation of the *spina dorsi*, for the remainder of my existence.

'Notwithstanding, to please my mother, he gave me a steel machine, made to press principally upon the *gibbous* part, and afterward tried a cross and strengthening plaster of *oxycroceum* and *opedeldock*, but without effect.

'The boys in the village soon began to call me humpy, and in a very short time, I was dignified, by general consent, with the title of my Lord. My

father, judging perhaps that my companions at school might banter and make game of my personal defects, procured a clergyman to live in the house in the capacity of tutor; but being himself an excellent classic, he gave up much of his time to superintend the education of his only son. Notwithstanding his paternal fondness and good intentions, I have but too frequently since felt the disadvantage of not having early enjoyed a public introduction into the word. Had my ear been a little more accustomed to the word quiz, I should have no occasion now to intrude myself upon your notice. But for the sake of perspicuity, it will be necessary to finish the description of my person, before I enter into a detail of the grievances it has caused. It has been already prefaced, that I was doomed to have a hump-back; at the age of twenty-four a scrofulous humour disfigured a face not naturally resembling that of Adonis. A little time before I reached my twenty-fifth year, two fore-teeth were knocked out by a chamber-maid in Yorkshire, whom I, after having drank too much, attempted to kiss; and what made this circumstance much more painful, she had a little before, patiently, I might say willingly, submitted her lips to be saluted by a young officer, who was quartered at that time in the town. My nose soon after began to increase to an enormous size, and is now perfectly unnatural. You may see in it the colours of the rainbow; but red and purple are particularly conspicuous, and, like rivals, are plainly seen to contend for the superiority. In short, Sterne's trumpeter, when he entered Strasburgh, had a snub to mine in point of size, and an aquiline in point of beauty, for I exceed Bardolph, the knight of the burning lamp.

'Riding through Eton about a week ago, with my nose before me,

Nescio quid meditans, nugarum, et totus in illis.

'Meditating, indeed, on I know not what, I was awakened from my reverie by several provincial words, the meaning of which were to me at that time, almost unintelligible; although by the gestures which accompanied them, it was no difficult matter to discover that they were not intended by way of compliment, "*There's a quiz! there's a good one! my God! what a Gig! what a tough one! Smoke his nose!*"

'Notwithstanding I perceived that these expressions proceeded from several young Etonians, not one of whom had arrived at the age of thirteen, my indignation was foolishly roused. I longed for the trumpeter's sword, and in the first ebullitions of rage, idly made use of some very hasty expressions. It was lucky for both parties, but more especially for myself, that I had nothing in my hand but a small flexible switch. However, my anger was momentary; I soon collected all my lost philosophy, repeating those lines of Horace, to which theorists often have recourse:

——————————— animum rege! qui nisi paret
Imperat: hunc frœnis, hunc tu compesce catena.

But it was too late, I had provoked the boys to resentment. Several now ran to the head of my beast.

——————————— Nex Saxa, nec ullum
Telorum interea cessat genus.

'Many pieces of mud and some stones were thrown, notwithstanding I advanced safe under cover of my nose, still quizzed and still pelted, till my quadruped arrived opposite the school-gate. I looked round for a master in vain: no black gown was to be seen. At length an arch boy, with dark brown hair, which hung in ringlets down his back, took up a thistle, which unfortunately lay in the road, and put it under my horse's tail. Can I with temper describe the fatal

catastrophe which ensued?—My long-tailed white steed, which is called Surrey, nervous and mettlesome to a degree, immediately began to plunge, putting his head between his legs, neighing, and doing I know not what besides. I strove strenuously to keep my seat—but

——————————— Oh! vain boast,
Who can control his fate?

'To be brief, my length was measured upon the ground, and I cut a place in the back part of my head, an inch and a half in length; my brown wig was full of blood, and my light blue coat was so stained, that I have never been able to cover my hump with it again. However, my ludicrous appearance was soon forgotten, and I was carried into a neighbouring shop. Many of the scholars crowded about, offering their services, which I knew not how to decline, though at first I feared to trust them; but the unfeigned humanity and attention that were now conspicious, soon convinced me their conduct was void of duplicity. Some of the larger boys, and one in particular, lifted up his hand to chastise the young criminal who had applied the thistle, but, upon my intercession, politely desisted. White Surrey, after being eased of his burden, had gallopped up Slough-road; however, he was brought safe back in a few minutes, my head was bound up, I remounted, and proceeded towards London.

'A sight of one of your periodical papers, induced me to address a letter to you, hoping, partly upon a public, and partly upon a private motive, that it may be perused within the walls of the college.

'I am confident that you, Mr. Gregory Griffin, was not one of the spectators who beheld my downfal, or it would not have escaped immediate censure from so able a pen: not that I would be thought one of those starch unconscionable gentlemen who expect to see

youth blessed with all the benefit of experience; well knowing that it would be as impossible to prescribe limits to the winds, as to forbid a second-form boy now and then to smoke a quiz. All I request is, that next time my nose and I come through Eton, the thistle may be omitted; and as missile weapons are now out of fashion among civilized nations, I particularly deprecate the dirt and stones.

'Eton has long been the distinguished seat of politeness as well as learning. One lash from you may perhaps have more effect in softening these last remains of barbarism in your republic, than all the birch within ten miles of the precincts of the college. We may all be easily convinced that external appearance is by no means a just criterion by which the merit of a man can be judged. You, Mr. Gregory Griffin, well know, that Alexander the Great, although conqueror of the world, had a personal defect; that Demosthenes had not an agreeable figure; that Mr. Pope was awry; that Horace was a short punch-bellied fellow, in short a tough one; that Voltaire was a good one; and that Socrates himself was a quiz.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,

London, May 4. VIR BONUS.'

My correspondent's complaint is by no means without foundation; and as censor-general, it is a subject which would not so long have escaped my animadversion, had I not considered that it would come with more propriety from one who had materially suffered from it, and could therefore more feelingly point out its ill consequences.

Every nation has its peculiar antipathies, political or religious; which, on the smallest commotion of the body politic, may be observed to take the lead, and

in a great measure direct the fury of the multitude; as in the natural body, the constitutional disease is roused from its dormant state, and is the first to evince its malignity, when the irregularity of the blood gives advantage to its attacks.

But these may generally be traced to their origin; a long series of wars; the dissension of families; a bigoted persecution; and frequently natural rivalship, have established the most rooted aversion for each other, in the very genius of nations apparently at peace; and hereditary hostilities have been kept up in the minds of the populace, by connecting them with every idea which naturally has the strongest hold on their feelings. The strange antipathies of our republic to the inoffensive race of Quizzes can be attributed to none of these causes; and it is impossible to account for the persecution of these beings, unless we suppose, that nonresistance only sharpens that rage which ugliness originally provoked. The Quiz, like the Eskimaux, generally seems contented with his humble lot; he eats, drinks, and sleeps, and has, no doubt, in some respects a reasonable soul, which is a privilege many naturalists have denied to the latter.

But, alas, I fear it is more than a Herculean labour to undertake the justification of a bottle nose; or rescue a suit of dittos from revilings! the populace will still be what it always was, and in spite of the admonitions of Gregory Griffin, a Jackass and a Quiz be persecuted with the same unrelenting severity.

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N° 30. MONDAY, JUNE 14, 1787.

Quanto rectius hic.—HORACE.
How much superior he, &c.

FROM the time that I first promised my fellow-citizens I would point out a set of books to their observation, from the perusal of which, if substituted in the place of novels, they might derive at least equal advantage and entertainment, there has scarce a day passed, in which some attempt has not been made by different correspondents, either by letters of inquiry or conjecture, to forestall my good advice, and anticipate my intended recommendation. Some have been so good-natured, as to cloak counsel under the garb of conjecture, and under pretence of guessing my intentions, have recommended their own favourite studies to my notice, as fit objects for my recommendation to the notice of my fellow-citizens; and furnished me with arguments for the support of their own propositions. Others have contented themselves with forming a variety of conjectures; and some of them have so far piqued themselves on their sagacity, that they have confidently offered me wagers of ten to one, which, I can assure my readers, I expect no small applause for not having accepted; when they consider, that had my views been at all mercenary, I might here have taken the opportunity to pick up a very comfortable sum in a very honourable way. Others again have been so conscious of their unbounded attachment to the study I have laboured to depreciate as to think themselves particularly pointed at, in that sentence, where I complained of the unmerited contempt with which the objects of my intended recom-

mendation are treated; and have sent me the most affecting assurances of better behaviour for the future. Historiophilus cannot help being surprised that I should know he had never 'read his Bible,' which he doubts not is the book to which I propose calling his attention; but he promises me faithfully henceforward to read a chapter of it every night going to bed, and never to devour at most above three novels in a month. Latinus's conscience has been equally busy in informing him, that the books I mean for his perusal can be no other than the Classics, to which though, he owns, he has hitherto neglected them, to gratify his taste, for sentiment, he has now determined, in compliance with my advice, to give the most ardent attention; and as an earnest of his amendment, he tells me, he has already struck out his name from the list of subscribers to the circulating library; for which he adds, rather archly, my bookseller, he believes, will not consider himself under any great obligation to me.

Though I must assure these gentlemen, that all their suppositions are very erroneous, I cannot but confess myself very much pleased, at the above-mentioned salutary, and I will add unforeseen, effects of my censorial exertions. Not but I am a little surprised, that any of my correspondents could for a moment suppose me so devoid of delicacy, as to propose, as a substitute for sentiment, the dull perusal of the unpolished ancients, and a study so unfashionable as religion.

There are, besides those already mentioned, another set of correspondents, of whom I must take some notice, before I proceed to the discovery of my purpose. These are some who have continued to send me frequent assurances of the little credit they give to my professions of disinterestedness; and who resolve, in spite of my declarations to the

contrary, to persevere in believing the studies, to which I wish them to give so much application, to be no other than my own lucubrations. One gentleman in particular, has taken the trouble to be extremely witty on the subject; and has had the art, by a course of the most apt and pointed observations, to turn my own declaration against me. He adduces the example of a highwayman, with great success; and tells an interesting and affecting story (but rather of the longest), extracted as it seems from the 'Newgate Calendar, or Malefactors' Bloody Register,' by which it appears, that the highwayman 'denied this murder before he was accused of it, and so got himself found out.' This my gentleman considers as exactly a case in point, and proceeds accordingly through a long series of logical divisions, and some very nice and subtle distinctions of 'whys' and 'wherefores' to argue, that my disavowal of any sinister view to my own advantage, could have been derived from nothing, but a perfect consciousness of the same; and consequently must be ascribed to precisely the same motives, as the unsolicited protestations of his hero the highwayman.

Ingenious as are the arguments, and conclusive as are the inferences, of my worthy correspondent, I must beg leave to differ from him very decidedly on the present question; and however sure the grounds of the indictment preferred against me may appear to him at present, I doubt not, but the very material evidence which I shall produce on my part, will, ere long, induce him to alter his opinion, and to give a verdict in favour of my disinterestedness.

I shall now therefore no longer delay to bring forward, as substantial and satisfactory witnesses of my disinterestedness, the books, which I think

so fully capable of supplying the place of those studies which usually engross the attention of our novel readers; and these are no other than the instructive and entertaining histories of Mr. THOMAS THUMB, Mr. JOHN HICKATHRIFT, and sundry other celebrated worthies; a true and faithful account of whose adventures and achievements, may be had by the curious, and public in general, price two-pence gilt, at Mr. Newbery's, St. Paul's Churchyard, and at some other gentleman's whose name I do not now recollect, the bouncing B. Shoe-lane.

I am well aware that full many are the opinions I shall have to combat against in behalf of my recommendation. Many there will be who will ungenerously cavil at the size of my *protegés;* armed with a sort of cowardly criticism, which though it dares not venture any strictures on a bulky folio, or scan the merits of even a tolerable corpulent quarto, yet thinks itself fully competent to give a decided opinion on so small an offspring of literature, and to persecute an unprotected sixteenmo with the most unrelenting severity.

To shew, however, the very high estimation, in which I am confident, they deserve to be held by the literary world, I shall not condescend to compare them with those precious farragos, in the room of which I intend introducing them to my fellow-citizens. Far higher are my ideas of the comparative excellence of Mr. Newbery's little books—and more especially of the two to which I have before alluded.—In the heroes of these, a candid and impartial critic will readily agree with me, that we find a very strong resemblance to those who are immortalized in Homeric song; that in Hickathrift we see pourtrayed the spirit, the prowess, and every great quality of Achilles; and in Thumb, the prudence, the caution, the patience, the perseverance, of Ulysses. There is, however, one peculiar ad-

vantage, which the histories of the modern worthies enjoy over their ancient originals, which is that of uniting the great and sublime of epic grandeur, with the little and the low of common life; and of tempering the fiercer and more glaring colours of the marvellous and the terrible, with the softer shades of the domestic and the familiar. Where, in either of the great originals, shall we find so pleasing an assemblage of tender ideas, so interesting a picture of domestic employments,—as the following sketch of the night preceding that in which Tom Thumb and his brethren were to be purposely lost in the wood?

'Now it was nine o'clock, and all the children, after eating a piece of bread and butter, were put to bed. But little Tom did not eat his—but put it in his pocket. And now all the children were fast asleep in their beds—but little Tom could not sleep for thinking of what he had heard the night before—so he got up, and put on his shoes and stockings,' &c.

How forcibly does this passage bring to the mind of every classical reader, the picture which Homer draws of Agamemnon, in the tenth book of the Iliad.

Αλλ' ουκ Ατρειδην Αγαμεμνονα, ποιμενα λαων,
Υπνος εχε γλυκερος, πολλα φρεσιν ορμαινοντα, &c.

The chiefs before their vessels lay,
And left in sleep the labours of the day:
All but the king; with various thoughts opprest,
His country's cares lay rolling in his breast, &c.
He rose
And on his feet the shining sandals bound, &c.

This vigilant conduct in brooding a sleepless night over embryo expeditions, and cautiously providing against future necessities by the pocketing of his bread and butter, is at least equal to any trait in the character of Ulysses.—Nor is it in point of

character only, that the resemblance between this work and the two great poems of antiquity is discernible. Here we find also in their fullest perfection

> Speciosa—Miracula rerum,
> Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum cyclope Charybdin.
>
> Antiphates his hideous feast devours, &c.—FRANCIS.

To say nothing of the form of the Ogre, which is painted in a style infinitely beyond the Polypheme of Homer—to pass over the terrible poetic imagery with which his first speech of *fee, faw, fum*, is replete—it must I think be readily allowed, the stratagem by which Tom releases himself and his brethren from the monster's power (by taking 'the crowns of gold from the heads of the little Ogres and Ogresses, and putting them on their own: whereby the giant comes and kills his own children'), is far more poetical, far more noble, than the pitiful escape of Ulysses and his companions, under the sheeps' bellies, and the paltry contrivance of Ουδεις. But there is another circumstance where the fictions of the two poets bear a still nearer resemblance to each other. The learned reader will easily guess that I mean the march of the Ogre, in the third chapter of Tom Thumb, and that of Neptune, in the thirteenth book of the Iliad. To enable my readers to draw the comparison better, I shall transcribe both.

'There the Ogre,' says my author, 'called for his seven-leagued boots, in which he journeyed, and he put them on; and he took one, two, three steps, and at the third he came to the dark cave where little Tom was.'

Of Neptune's passage from Samothrace to Troy, Homer says,

> Τρὶς μὲν ὑφέξατ' ἰὼν· τὸ δὲ τέτρατον, ἵκετο τέκμωρ,
> Αἰγὰς·

From realm to realm three ample strides he took,
And at the fourth the distant Egæ shook.

'Which,' says his commentator, 'is pretty near a degree at each step.'—But let the reader candidly examine both the passages, and make fair allowance for the unavoidable difference in sound, of 'the distant Egæ,' and 'the dark cave where little Tom was,' and I doubt not but my author will claim at least an equal share of admiration.

But it would be an endless task to point out every latent beauty, every unnoticed elegance with which these productions are interspersed. Not to enter therefore into a comparative view of the characters of Hickathrift and Achilles; to omit noticing the affecting and solemn invocation of the princess Cinderella to the Bean her counsellor, beginning, 'Bean, Bean, little Bean, I charge thee in the name of the fairy Truflo' (which, by-the-bye, justifies the opinion of Pythagoras with regard to the reverence due to this vegetable); to omit this, I say, and other innumerable passages, equally worthy of notice, I shall hasten to inform my fellow-citizens, that in compliance with my advice, my bookseller proposes very soon substituting in the room of his present catalogue, a list of all the productions of this kind, which can be procured either at Mr. Newbery's or the bouncing B.

And I doubt not but I shall in a very short time have the satisfaction to see the generality of my fellow-citizens, running through them with the most eager avidity, from beginning to end—from 'Once upon a time,' to 'lived very happy afterwards:' fully convinced, that such works as could bear a competition with the strains of Homer, would be degraded by any comparison with the silly effusions of nonsense and sentiment—convinced too, if the examples for the purposes of morality be considered, that a character which gleaned the several excellences of

all the Edwards, the Sir Harrys, and the Pamelas of novel-writers—would be but a poor competitor with one that joined in itself the patience and chastity of Cinderella, the prudence of Thumb, and the heroism of Hickathrift.—B.

N° 31. MONDAY, JUNE 18, 1787.

Opere in longo fas est obrepere somnum.—HORACE.
In a long work an author once may dose.—NAN.

HAVING an idle hour the other evening, and being in one of those miscellaneous humours in which our sole object is to kill time; I happened to fix on a moral essay on human nature, as the most effectual and expeditious means of dispatching him. As I turned over the pages, I could not but remark, how ingeniously its philanthropic author had endeavoured to put his readers out of humour with themselves, by proving to them, that in spite of their own endeavours, they must inevitably be greater fools or knaves than their grandfathers.

From the contemplation of those weeping philosophers, my reflection naturally led me to those ingenious projectors, who with more benevolence, though if possible less effect, have devoted their literary labours to the reformation of a vicious age; and formed such sublime and comprehensive projects for reducing human nature to its primitive state of purity.

The recollection of the deep-laid projects for the abolition of Christianity, the consolidation of Turks, Jews, and Gentiles, the conversion of the grand

Seignior, the Pope, or the Emperor of China, was so interesting a subject that it might have kept me awake beyond my usual hour; had I not fortunately recollected, that in the course of thirty numbers I had not had one vision. Alarmed at this idea, I was determined to go to sleep without losing a moment, and dream in full time for the press. I had no sooner put the first part of my resolution in practice, when lo! whether Morpheus is the professed patron of periodical writers, or is ambitious of removing the imputation of levity from his character, by giving a vision some kind of regularity, from whichever cause it proceeded, my dream was an exact continuation of the subject which had so long employed my thoughts.

It was at the dead of night when some eccentric being (whose project had I conceive been hatched long before I had fallen asleep, otherwise, gentle reader, every thing could not have been so exactly prepared), had made ready the following conspiracy for execution. Tired of continually harassing his mind for the advantage of an ungrateful public, and vexed to the gizzard to find his predictions ridiculed by those butterflies who can so unfeelingly enjoy the happiness of the present hour, amidst luxury, faction, and all the alarming symptoms of a decay in human nature; he had laid a general plot among the orthodox adherents of roast beef and fat ale, for the total extermination of what the world term men of genius.

In consequence of this agreement, it was concerted, that the massacre should take place at the sound of a steeple bell; this in all conspiracies, real and visionary, is an absolute requisite, for the truth of which I refer my readers to the great authority of the Parisian massacre; besides all tragedians, whose poetical variations of incursions, flourishes, alarms, murders, &c. have universally originated from the

unaffected simplicity of the Bell. At this spirit-stirring sound then, what inundations of countenances, to all appearance inoffensive, rushed out in the character of assassins; and in what a ludicrous mixture was the lean haggard eagerness of Grub-street, contrasted with the rosy independence of Cheapside. All however seemed unanimous in the resistless fury with which they persecuted the helpless objects of their vengeance. In their avidity to destroy, the innocent often fell with the guilty; and even newspaper odes on the seasons were sufficient to decide the fate of an unhappy poetaster. It had been before provided, that convivial ballads should be exempted from the common fate; as the destruction of them might materially injure the wine trade. Intermixed with those who were most active in this scene of destruction, I was struck with the figures of a number of slavish wretches, laden with fetters and instruments of torture, and every where following the conspirators. I was informed by a byestander, that these were chiefly commentators, whose office it was to bind and torment all those who were destined to be preserved as the laughing-stock of their persecutors; that the fetters were critical rules, and the instruments of torture were *Diversæ lectiones occultæ allegoriæ*, and *interpretationes elegantissimæ*, supposed to have been originally invented by the northern barbarians, those destroyers of all literature, as their etymology can scarcely be traced to any civilized language. 'Frequently, Sir,' continued he, 'these executioners seize on a victim whose amazing strength is sufficient to baffle their utmost efforts; a Homer, a Pindar, or a Shakspeare may burst the fetters, or defy the ineffectual tortures of this race; but their violence has often maimed and utterly defaced geniuses of a more delicate texture.' I was so well satisfied with this account, that my curiosity would have led me to have asked more questions; but that

I found myself (as is the nature of dreams), on a sudden transported to the centre of our little world. A select party had been detached here from the main body, and had been joined by several malecontent citizens; but by some unaccountable mistake, they had directed their search to those elms so famed by faithless bards, whose affectionate veneration existed in professions alone. The spot was occupied by cricketers, whose uniform vacancy of countenance secured them from the attacks of this licentious mob. One solitary poet was reclining on the grassy bank; but upon a cross examination it was discovered, that he was composing on the pleasures of a country life; and in the course of his examination, as he betrayed other evident marks of insanity, it was thought proper to dismiss him with a gentle reprimand. In their return however to the metropolis, this detachment intercepted an epistle from Corydon, of Little Turnstile, to Amaryllis, of Smallbury-green; it was immediately conveyed to their leader, who supposing it might contain some material information, examined the contents; but on finding a confused jargon of purling rills, grassy hills, woolly sheep, gentle sleep, &c. &c. was in doubt how to proceed, when it was suggested by one of the commentators, that it must be a counterplot, couched in allegorical terms. Their march was accordingly directed to Smallbury-green, and orders issued to seize any suspicious person or persons who were discovered within a hundred yards of any rill, ditch, gutter, canal, or the like. Many were accordingly apprehended, and some in the very act of composing; but as it appeared they were inoffensive beings, totally incapable of design, and was moreover urged that they by no means fell under the description of men of genius, it was determined to punish the ringleaders, who should be adjudged formidable enemies *in terrorem*, Theocritus, Virgil, Pope, and Shenstone, as they were

non-apparent, and no informer could produce their equals, were accordingly burnt in effigy. And here, gentle reader, did fortune again befriend me; for perceiving that I had dreamt a paper, she thought it most adviseable to set the giddy populace to shouting at the spectacle, and by this excellent manœuvre, rouse me from my dream, as she regularly has done my predecessors.

And now, as I foresee, reader, that this is a subject which is likely to call forth thy hidden talent of being facetious, should some plain-dealing body, in the simplicity of his heart, enquire how Gregory escaped among this massacre, and shouldest thou find thyself inclined, under cover of an arched leer, to answer, that he was perfectly secure; smother the rising joke, and learn, to the utter confusion of thy waggery, that it has been the privilege of all dreamers, from time immemorial, to be uninterested spectators of the visionary scene; except, that in dreams in and about the valley of Bagdad, the Mirzah or Abdallah of the story has usually some obsequious geni at hand to serve a double purpose; that of unfolding to him the hidden meaning of the dream, and pointing out to the reader the correctness of the author's allegory. But as my dream is neither oriental nor allegorical, I shall beg leave on this occasion to plead prerogative.

To conclude, I must entreat thee to take this and all my other naps in good part; and to reflect, that where an Addison has dosed, and a Johnson slept, it is no impeachment, even on the proverbial vigilance of a GRIFFIN, to be sometimes overtaken.—C.

*

N° 32. MONDAY, JUNE 25, 1787.

——————Unus et alter.
Assuitur pannus,——————Hor.
'Tis all a patch-work.

To a writer, and especially a periodical writer, it has justly been observed, that there is no part of his business so difficult as the selection of a subject.

That traveller will arrive sooner at his place of destination, who pushes on to the end of his journey through a strait and direct road, from whence no winding paths allure his feet, no variety of distant scenery diverts his attention; than he, whose way lies through a country diversified with a multitude of objects, which solicit his admiration; who stops to gaze at every opening prospect, to catch the sunshine of every meadow, and enjoy the coolness of every grove.

Nearly the same difference exists between the writer of volumes, who pursues one settled subject, whether of reasoning or narrative, and whose labours, when that subject is fixed, are confined to the detail of facts, or the arrangement of arguments; and the Essayist, whose periodical exertions require a desultory diligence; which unable to pursue an uninterrupted train of thought, must, to avoid a sameness of subject, occasionally adapt itself to every species of composition, and must assume a variety of styles and sentiments, such as may suit a variety of topics, and agree with the different purposes of satire, or commendation, of sprightly wit or speculative solemnity.

It is not therefore from a dearth of subjects, but from a too great abundance of them, that this diffi-

culty in selection takes its rise. A man who sits down to a table where there is but one dish, will, if he is hungry, make a hearty meal of that; but if the board be laden with a profusion of different delicacies, he will, however sharp set, make some pause ere he begins to consider against which the first attack of his appetite shall be directed.

In a situation, much resembling either of the preceding which I have described, do I frequently find myself at the beginning of a paper. For either my attention, like that of the traveller, is so absorbed in the contemplation of distant images, and so distracted by the multiplicity of surrounding objects, that while I gaze at them all with undeciding admiration, I advance not a step towards the completion of my design;—or, like the gentleman at table, my appetite is solicited by so great a variety of delicacies all equally tempting, that while I am eager to taste them all, I know not on which to begin;—or (which is as applicable and expressive a simile as either of the foregoing), my mind, like the coffin of the prophet of Mecca, is so equally assailed on every side by the magnetism of surrounding attractions, that it hangs in suspense between them all, without the power to incline to either.

In almost all cases, where the judgment is unable to decide, chance, however little mankind in general may be inclined to confess it, is the best and only arbitrator. The biographer of the great La Mancha freely owns, that in all points of the road which admitted of hesitation, he did not scruple to leave it, according to the laudable custom of knights errant from time immemorial, to chance, or what is nearly the same thing, to the judgment of Rosinante. And it is related of some French judge, who was remarked throughout his whole practice for the almost infallible justice of his decrees, that whenever any extraordinary case occurred, the circumstances of which

were so perplexed as to render him incapable of giving a decided opinion in favour of either side, with satisfaction to his own conscience, he was accustomed to retire to his closet, and refer it to the final decision of the die. For my own part, so firm is my reliance on the arbitration of chance, that I can assure my readers, many is the good paper, for the subject of which they are indebted to her interference; many are the hints which she has been kind enough to throw in my way, by an accidental dip into a poetical miscellany, or an Ainsworth's dictionary; or a casual glance at a newspaper advertisement, or a pamphlet in a bookseller's shop-window. Nor indeed is it possible that chance, if trusted to, should suggest any subject, out of which something might not be gathered, capable enough of being rendered serviceable to purposes either of instruction or amusement. This I believe my readers will be ready to allow, when I assure them, that even this paper, totally unconnected as it may appear to them with any use whatever, is calculated to serve as a precept of morality. I intend it indeed as a striking instance of the folly of not confining one's attention to one particular object; as he who has many objects in view, cannot attend properly to the pursuit of any one of them. Thus there is nothing however inconsiderable, from which morality may not be derived; whether it be from the contemplation of a broomstick, or of the chubby countenances of tomb-stone cherubim. 'And for a text' (or a motto) says the celebrated author of Tristram Shandy—'Cappadocia, Pontus, and Phrygia, will answer as well as any sentence out of any book whatever.'

There are however other circumstances still more embarrassing in the choice of a subject. 'That there is nothing new under the sun,' was the no less true than lamentable complaint of some ancient philosopher. And if this want of novelty obtained in his

time, what can a poor authorling of the present day expect? when so many hungry followers have been for ages gathering up every crumb of invention which had fallen from the tables of the ancients, and picking the bones of every disputation on every topic, over and over again, with the most industrious eagerness. It could not fail, I am certain, to excite the commiseration of my readers, were I to relate how many bright ideas and brilliant expressions I have rejected, merely because they have been thought and expressed in the same manner a hundred times before; how often, after wandering in vain to find some untrodden path of original invention, I have been tempted to beat the beaten way of imitation; and to take another turn out of the threadbare topics of 'virtue and vice,' or, 'the return of *Ulysses*.'

But though to place common objects in new lights, to clothe familiar ideas in unhackneyed language, so as to give an air of novelty to conceptions with which every body is acquainted, be a labour requiring the united efforts of ingenuity and judgment; yet even when this is accomplished, the reader must have a certain coincidence of thought, a sympathy of feeling, and must peruse a paper with the same spirit with which it was written, ere he can enter fully into the ideas, and relish the sentiments of the author. Hence is it, reader, that you and I have, in all probability, frequently differed in opinion, during the course of these my lucubrations. Every paper must infallibly borrow its hue from the humour, or the accident of the moment, in which it is written. Now if it has, as it no doubt often has, so happened, that you have taken up in a merry humour, what I have written in a grave one, or *vice versâ*, that you have been very solemn when I have been disposed to be very witty, it is ten to one, but both my wit and my gravity have been totally lost upon you: that the sprightliest sallies of the former have been un-

able to derange the phlegmatic primness of your muscular economy; and that instead of receiving with due reverence the precepts of the latter, you have been wickedly inclined to treat me and my morality with most unchristian ridicule.

Hearing the other day that a fellow-citizen of mine had exercised his genius in the composition of a tragedy, I took the liberty of inquiring the subject of it, and was informed by him, after considerable hesitation, that it was 'on no particular subject.' This is, I believe, nearly the predicament in which my present paper stands: for though I flatter myself I have pointed out in it what a paper ought to be, it has been rather by example than precept; by instancing in an eminent degree what it ought not to be. But as I have gone on thus far without selecting any particular subject, and as I am now too far advanced to dip for a new one, in any of the books which lie upon my table, I shall conclude my paper with a letter, in which my fellow-citizens will find such rules laid down, as will, if well observed, contribute, no doubt, to render them good and useful citizens of the greater world.—And I flatter myself, my correspondent will forgive my publishing it with such a view, though contrary to his express desire.

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'DEAR SIR,

"Do what you are bid,"—"come when you are called,"—"speak when you are spoken to,"—and "shut the door after you."—Such were the precepts, Mr. Griffin, which in my earlier days I imbibed from the tongue of my grandmother; such was the path of morality chalked out for me, by following which I was to become an honour to my family, a credit to my country, and Lord Chancellor. For you must know, Sir, that from my infancy, this was the destined goal to which my course of glory was to be

directed. As I was the darling of my grandmother, to her was left the sole care and superintendence of my education. For the furtherance therefore of her projects in my favour, it was resolved, when I was eight years old, to send me to Eton. At my setting out her former maxims were reinforced by the addition of a few more equally serviceable exhortations, viz. "to be a good boy"—"mind my book"—"never to get on horseback till I could ride"—"nor to venture into the water till I could swim"—and above all, "not to make myself sick by the too hasty expenditure of the sixpence, which she bestowed on me at parting."—All these maxims, Mr. Griffin, comprehensive as they are, I have carefully treasured up in my mind; and I write now, merely to ask your opinion of their efficacy to make me an honour to my family, and every thing else which her fond hopes have cut me out for. At any rate, Mr. Griffin, there are, I am confident, many of our fellow-citizens, who have far inferior precepts for their moral conduct than myself; and I must beg, therefore, that you will not take advantage of my letter, by betraying my secret assurances of success, to raise me up competitors in my progress to the Woolsack.

I am, Sir, yours, ——— B.'

N° 33. MONDAY, JULY 2, 1787.

Aliæ, nullis hominum cogentibus, ipsæ,
Sponte suâ veniunt.—VIRG.

Some without man's compulsive art,
Shoot forth self-born.

THE philosopher Xanthus, says L'Estrange, going one day, attended by his slave, Æsop, to a garden near the city, was asked by its owner (who in course

as a classical gardener had an exclusive privilege of philosophizing), why, notwithstanding the high culture and artificial nourishment he applied to his exotics, the native weeds, under the disadvantages of a barren soil, were stronger in their growth, and more luxurious in their vegetation? Xanthus, who though he could not close with his adversary, knew how to parry his thrust, after some reflection turned to Æsop, and with seeming contempt of the question, commanded him to answer it. 'All power of vegetation,' replied the slave, 'is in the hands of nature, who in this instance acts with the usual partiality of a stepmother; depressing the produce of art, and invigorating her own hardy offspring with the profusion of parental fondness.'

What was in the instance of the vegetable world so well applied by this self-instructed philosopher, may, with equal propriety, be observed in the seemingly partial distribution of natural endowments to the human mind; and history does not perhaps furnish us with a more striking instance than his own, of the decided superiority nature will, in all her operations, maintain over the feeble imitations of art. Even under the complicated discouragements of low origin, depressed condition, and want of education, the naturally quick conceptions of this unenlightened slave, reflected a brightness, which the artificial polish of acquired knowledge was unable to equal. As we believe that our souls are originally of one substance, and will hereafter universally return to their pristine state, the manifest difference in our powers of mind, can only be referred to the different organization of our bodies; and we may conclude, that the different degrees of susceptibility in those secret channels of connexion through which our living agents act, has in some degree the same effect on the mental faculties, which dress has in ornamenting or disfiguring our bodies themselves.

It is evident then, by so remarkable a provision against it, that nature never designed a universal equality in the human species; that she has wisely and impartially divided the orders of mankind, by raising a chosen few to act in a conspicuous sphere, as the objects of laudable emulation, or the melancholy warnings to overbearing ambition; by conducting others, and of these a larger number, by a safer, but less popular road, to honest reputation; and by filling up the vacuum with those, by far the most considerable part of the species, who glide through 'the calm sequestered vale of life' with uninterrupted tranquillity, and have no care of protracting their existence beyond the burial service.

Human ingenuity, however, convinced from early experience that nature, though an excellent mother, was too capricious in the distribution of her favours for a good politician, has invented a system (the best criterion of which is, that it has stood the test of so many ages), not only calculated to restrain the irregular sallies of genius, but even by adscititious knowledge, to render the most barren minds capable of rivalling on some occasions the fertility of original imagination. Education, however differently modelled by capacities endowed with the united advantages of art and nature; however its complexion may vary in the *Campus Martius* at Eton, and the paved courtyard of a private academy, *originally undertaken at the particular request of a few select friends, by a Clergyman of unquestionable probity, who will pay the strictest attention to the diet, morals, clothes, and improvements, of the young gentlemen committed to his care;* is in its object still the same.

Taught by experience that a knowledge of the belles lettres is a universal recommendation, without which unpolished virtue may indeed command respect, but can seldom excite esteem, we make an advantageous exchange of the unthinking leisure of

childhood, for laying the permanent foundation of a future benefit. But though classical knowledge is an essential part of a liberal education, it by no means comprehends the whole of it; nor does it follow that a man who is totally devoid of it, may not fulfil with the greatest propriety the social as well as moral duties. It must be obvious to the eye of the most superficial observer, that all capacities are not adapted to the same path of study; and on that account the idea of loading the mind indiscriminately with what it can neither relish or digest, is so palpably misconceived, as hardly to require confutation.

Yet how many Quixotic enthusiasts are there, who, unaccustomed to study mankind, otherwise than through the interpretation of the bigotry of the historian, the spleen of the satirist, or the flattering misrepresentations of the poet, and tinctured with the narrow prejudices of a recluse life, sally forth, in all the terrors of discipline, to undertake the charge of educating a select number? Impressed with a veneration for the established mode, their idea of excellence in education is of the same nature with that of Demosthenes* in oratory; while true genius sickens at the gross surfeit, and fades away into determined indolence, or despairing ignorance: and natural dulness, at too low an ebb to be farther depressed by external accidents, is crammed with a crude mass of indigested learning; like a green goose at Michaelmas, or a mathematical ignoramus before his examination. Totally unadapted for the world, the self-sufficient pedant naturally looks up to learning as the sole end of life; and expects the same deference among mankind, as his preceptor has hitherto exacted for him, from his less laborious equals. Till spleened at human nature for unde-

* Who on being asked what were the three most essential qualities of an Orator, replied, 'Action, Action, Action.'

ceiving him, he expires a misanthrope; or, as his utmost prospect of exaltation, lives a Bentley, to feel the searching severity of a Swift's contempt.

Let us now examine of what superior efficacy is that milder system, which endeavours more at mixing pleasure with utility; and holds liberality of sentiment, knowledge of mankind, and unassuming politeness, not unworthy the study of a learned man. Whatever may be the established practice of the wise in the great world, of dying as naked as they were born, I affirm, that nobody ever passed through this world without being the richer for it. A citizen of this republic has the peculiar advantage of preparing himself for his intercourse with mankind by his own experience. Not to mention the miniature representation of the passions and affections in their most lively colour, which in the course of this work I have more than once touched upon; the different situations also into which chance in after-life may cast him, are here subjected to his consideration. He has here a practical opportunity of separating obedience from servility, and tyranny from authority; nay, still farther, as his happiness hereafter in a great measure depends on his established character here, his approaching exit requires in some measure the same circumspection, which old age will call for at some future period of existence.

The classics are our grand road to reputation; all the honorary distinctions of our political system are confined to excellence in that line. But supposing, as is frequently the case, we are not naturally endowed with a taste for their elegances, there are still secondary pursuits sufficient to crown with success the different efforts by which our universal ambition prompts us to be known. Socrates, though totally unqualified for a general or a politician, was still a great man; and Cæsar, though he preferred an active enjoyment of present good, to the pursuit of

abstracted ideas, was the same. But had the blind obstinacy of a parent, or the mistaken pedantry of a master, placed the one in the field of Philippi, the other in the grove at Athens, though the extent of capacity which in their present exalted situations characterizes them, might possibly have extricated them from the scrape, in all probability the philosophical and political world would have wanted two excellent topics of conversation.

May we not then with justice conceive, that from the frequent intervention of these casualties, the promising greatness of many a Cæsar has been blasted in the bud? and if so, is not an attention to the bent of the genius, or rather the allowance of a sufficient liberty for its natural luxuriance, a point to be considered in education? A shoot when grafted on an ungenial stock, will fade and lose its original beauty; whereas, when nature is consulted by the skilful botanist, and admitted to share in an operation on which she alone has the power of conferring success, the alien plant derives additional strength, from the nutritive powers of a sap congenial to its own.

In like manner, as the human mind is every where strongly analogous to the natural system, a cricketer will, in poring over a page of Horace, lose the trophies which await him as hero of the Hampshire, and bulwark of the White Conduit; and exchange the invigorating commendations of a Small, Shock White, or Lumpy, for the dull drudgery of blundering through ten long years of scholastic labour. The poet will be equally circumstanced in the field; no innate consciousness of knowledge can console him for the ridicule of an unforeseen trip; no muse on Parnassus secure his wicket; or Minerva, however serviceable she might formerly have been on similar occasions, avert an all-levelling bowl from the nervous arm of his Bæotian adversary.—C.

N° 34. MONDAY, JULY 2, 1787.

NEMO in sese tentat descendere.—JUV.
NOBODY tries himself to scan.—

'SIR,

'THE peculiar hardships of my situation call loudly for your interference. As they have hitherto escaped the notice of those righters of wrongs, and redressers of grievances, your periodical predecessors, it remains with you, Sir, by the publishing of this letter, to clear my injured fame from the aspersions of the malevolent; and vindicate to the world the importance of my character.

'I shall not detain you, Mr. Griffin, by a long account of my birth, parentage, and education; suffice it only to say, that I never received any education; that I am not indebted to a parent for my existence; but that, notwithstanding I am thus defective in point of ancestry, I boast a family of wide alliances and extensive relationships, and date my birth even prior to the creation.

'In short, Sir, the person who has now the honour to address you, is no other than *Nobody*. To prove what I have advanced of my large connexions, I am, you must know, allied to *Anybody*, nearly related to *Somebody*, and connected by the closest ties to the family of *Everybody*. Besides these, the various branches of the *What'shisnames*, the *Whatyecallums*, the *Suchaones*, and the *Thingums* and *Thingumbobs*, come, one and all, from the same parent stock.

'From this account you might probably be led to suppose, that my situation is, of all others, the most enviable; that I am growing old amid the caresses

of a diffusive family; and that I am looked up to with wonder and veneration by the rest of the world, as a being pre-existent to the common ancestor, and contemporary with every generation of mankind. But alas, Mr. Griffin, very widely mistaken would this idea be found.—Alas, Sir, the world holds me in contempt, and my nearest relations have been taught by their example to do the same. I cannot make *Anybody* confess his knowledge of me; *Everybody* shuns the suspicion of being acquainted with me; and *Somebody* has long ago set himself up in direct opposition to me; and by degrees attracted to his party all the inferior branches of the family, who find their ideas of self-consequence much more pleasingly gratified in the relationship they bear to him, however distant, than in the disgraceful consanguinity of *Nobody*.

'It has not been always thus. There was a time when the name of *Nobody* was more respected.—You cannot but know, Mr. Griffin, that in all places where the feudal system obtained, and even now I believe, in some remote parts of Scotland, it has been customary for whole clans to take the name of the master under whom they held their several tenures; insomuch, that it was nothing unusual for the inhabitants of whole districts to be distinguishable from each other only by the difference of their *prænomen*, or Christian name, or by some additional *cognomen*, which they adopted for the purpose of this distinction; so that had you, Sir, lived in those days, there would have been, I doubt not, whole provinces peopled with a hopeful progeny of *Griffins*. Ah, Sir, these were times indeed. Then it was, that I and my old opposer *Somebody*, by mutual compact, shared the land between us, and distributed our names to our respective adherents. The barons, to be sure, and all principal persons, considered themselves as members of his family; but then the tenants

and the bulk of the people were of necessity contented to rank under my denomination. And so very inconsiderable was the number of his adherents compared to that of mine, that he might be almost said scarcely to have *Anybody* on his party; whilst comparatively speaking, *Everybody* sided with me.

'There were then no regular steps of consequence, no intermediate gradation of ranks between the lord and his slave; but while the importance of the one was sufficiently gratified in the title of *Somebody*; the other, hugging himself in his own insignificancy, was fully satisfied to herd with the multitude of *Nobodies*.

'How different is my situation, and how much lessened is the estimation in which I am held in these days; while *Everybody* is labouring with restless ambition to be considered by the world as *Somebody*. It is this principle which enforces the young heir into expenses far beyond the limits of his fortune, and melts the accumulation of years in the extravagance of an hour; that he may by his spirited conduct, persuade the admiring world, that he is *Somebody*. On what other principle does the spouse of the substantial shop-keeper ground her arguments, in favour of frosting the cauliflower-wig, and rolling up the round belly in a new red waistcoat, but that he may be enabled to display himself on a Sunday's terrace, with a dress and figure, which may shew him to be *Somebody?* And whence that self-sufficient smile which curdles the fat cheek of his love, but from a consciousness of having assumed, together with her flowered damask, a degree of importance, which abundantly rescues her from the disgraceful appellation of a *Nobody?*

'But even these desertions, Sir, however distressing, and this contempt, however wounding, I might perhaps be able to endure without complaint; and console myself with the idea of their being but nega-

tive misfortunes. But who, Mr. Griffin, could forbear to complain of the malice of false aspersions, and the railings of groundless abuse? who could bear, without repining, the imputations of vices, of which he was perfectly unconscious; of outrages, of which he was wholly incapable?

'There does not pass a day in which my name is not called in a hundred times, as a foil to the vices and imperfections of others; as thus, in speaking of any notorious offender, "*Nobody* is more wicked," —"*Nobody* more abandoned,"—"*Nobody* will come sooner to the gallows."—It is, however, some compensation for this, you will say, that I am made use of as a comparison for all that is good and great in any character.—But, alas! when you consider how far greater is the propensity of most people to calumny than commendation, you will readily own, that the being coupled once or twice with the name of a great and good man, is but a slender consolation, for being daily associated with the name of every thing that is rascally and villanous under the sun.

'It cannot, I think, have escaped your observation, how often in common life, a suspicion of being an acquaintance of mine, has been prejudicial to many an innocent and well-meaning person; and has served as an excuse for treating him with the utmost incivility; a hint, that such a person was a fellow "who spoke to *Nobody*," or a "creature that *Nobody* knew," has been a cause sufficient to subject him to the most mortifying rudeness and contempt. But I shall pass over the consideration of this, and a multitude of other circumstances of the same nature: nor shall I stop to make a single observation on that unaccountable malignity with which mankind are taught to persecute me in proverbs, and most maliciously to pronounce that wind "An ill wind, which blows *Nobody* good."—But,

'I shall proceed without delay to shew the injus-

tice and wickedness of mankind, in laying to my charge several enormities which it is actually out of my power to perform. The first instance which occurs to my memory is one of very great antiquity, of which you, Mr. Griffin, have in a former paper very properly taken the notice it deserved, for which I thank you. I allude to the paltry contrivance of Ulysses, who, to shield himself and his party from the resentment of Polypheme, for the extinction of his eye, had the address to persuade that simple shepherd swain, that it was one Ουδεις (meaning me, Sir), who was perpetrator of the bloody deed. Of this accusation you have already had the goodness to acquit me to the world. But it were endless to dwell on every particular circumstance which has been laid hold of, to sully my fair fame with malevolent aspersions. I should detain you too long, were I to enumerate the many atrocious house-breakings of which a confirmed suspicion is said to have fallen on *Nobody*; the many midnight murders at which *Nobody* was thought to have been present; or (to descend to less heinous offences) the many strayed tea-spoons and broken china-basons, the guilt of which a favourite lap-dog, a cat, or a fine family of little ones, have been lucky enough to throw off their own shoulders on those of *Nobody*. I myself was not a little displeased the other day, to hear an old gentleman (who by-the-by, has one son of two-and-twenty, and several head of younger children, living in the house with him) complain, in the double capacity of master of a family, and justice of the peace, that he had at that time a pier-glass shattered to pieces, an arm broken off his mahogany easy-chair, and a housemaid in the Straw, for all which circumstances he was, as far as he could learn, indebted to the kind officiousness of *Nobody*.

'Now, Mr. Griffin, I have laid my misfortunes be-

fore you in a manner that I think cannot fail to excite your compassion. With you it remains to mediate between me and the public—and by explaining my case to them, to confer on me a lasting favour and benefit, and lay a strong claim to the gratitude of,

Sir, your sincere admirer,
and most humble petitioner,
NOBODY.

'P. S. One thing, Sir, I forgot to mention, while I was upon the subject of the mischiefs laid to my charge, which is, that even my most violent accusers have always the justice to own, that if Nobody does perform all these exploits, they fully expect Nobody to make them reparation.'

N° 35. MONDAY, JULY 9, 1787.

Sed turpem putat in scriptis, metuique lituram.

———I but forgot,
The last and greatest art, the art to blot.———

THERE are few instances of imperfection more mortifying to human pride, than those incidental ones which occur in the most illustrious and distinguished characters. The traces of occasional oversight are frequently discovered in those figures, whose outlines have been dashed with a gigantic sublimity; of the masterpieces of the most celebrated painters few will remain which we can declare faultless; after those are excepted, in which some trivial oversight has been discovered, and published with all the efforts of industrious petulance. The errors of Hannibal and Charles the XII. are such, as an inferior genius would have been preserved from, by the mere frigidity of cautious consideration; however superior

the noble daring of a great mind may be to that cold and faultless mediocrity which is approved without admiration. Though the puns of Paradise Lost, the incidental noddings of the Iliad, and the *parties quarrées* in *Somerset* place, vanish before the collected splendour of the whole design; they must be regarded as infinitely more mortifying, than a series of continued dulness, or a collection of united deformity.

In such a train of reflections I was interrupted, by an unexpected summons from my editor; who informed me, that a stranger, of a very extraordinary appearance, had of late made very frequent inquiries for me; and was now at his house, waiting my arrival with considerable impatience. As I am not by nature either incurious or discourteous, I followed my editor; who, after a walk of about a quarter of an hour, introduced me to a little parlour, and a little elderly man, with a very serious countenance, and exceeding foul linen. After smoothing his approaches to my acquaintance by some introductory compliments, he informed me, as indeed I might have gussed 'that he was by profession an author; that he had been for many years a literary projector; that, owing to a kind of fatality, which had hitherto attended his attempts, and a firm resolution on his own side never to indulge the trivial taste of an ill-judging age, in which it was his misfortune to be born,—but he would not trouble me with a detail of the open hostilities committed on his works by avowed criticism, or the more secret and dangerous attempts of tacit malevolence, and pretended contempt,—that he had lately hit upon a project, which by its nature must secure to itself the attention of the public, and which, if he had not formed a very wrong estimate of its merit, would draw his former efforts from the dust of unmerited oblivion, into general notice, and universal approbation.

'It could not have escaped an exact observer, and such a one he might, without hazarding the imputation of flattery, pronounce Mr. Griffin (whereupon Mr. Griffin bowed), that the reputation of our great tragic poet was sinking apace; and that, not so much from any radical or intrinsic defect in his writings, as from some venial errors, and incidental omissions. Our more refined neighbours had never been able to relish the low humour which pervades every scene, or the frequent violation of those unities, which they observe with so religious a regard. Mr. Voltaire, with that philosophic candour which so strongly characterized his life and writings, had abandoned his defence; and, though in some instances he had designed to borrow from him, had condemned him as a poet of a barbarous age, and the favourite of an unenlightened people. Even among a national audience, the most admired of his dramas were received at least without that enthusiastic applause they had formerly excited; and we must expect, that, in another century, the partiality for our favourite poet will vanish, together with our national antipathies against popery and wooden shoes, and frogs and slavery; and that a taste for French criticism will immediately follow a relish for their cookery.

'Something must be done, Mr. Griffin, and that shortly. The commentators have done little or nothing. Indeed what could be expected from such a plan; could any thing be more ridiculous? they have absolutely confined themselves to what Shakspeare might possibly have written! I am fully sensible that the task of reducing to poetic rules, and critical exactness, what was written in ignorance or contempt of both, requires a genius and ability little inferior to that of the original composer; yet this is my project; which, however arduous in the undertaking, however difficult in execution, I am persuaded

to attempt; and to whom can I with greater propriety——Mr. Griffin, who himself——so early an age——in so extraordinary a manner——&c. &c.'

My friend continued, by remarking, 'that the people of Athens allowed to the judicious critic, who should adapt a tragedy of Æschylus to the stage, an equal proportion of credit and copy-money, with the author of an original drama. Yet he desired me to observe, that the author of Grecian tragedy was far more strictly observant of poetic discipline, than the father of the English stage. In all his tragedies, there is only one in which he has ventured to break the unity of place; an essential point, and, as my friend declared, highly necessary; though it is very natural for the spectator to mistake the stage for a palace, actresses, for virgin princesses, &c. yet it is impossible for him to imagine that he is in Bohemia, when, but the act before, he was fully convinced that he was in Sicily.'

He at length concluded by drawing out of a tin-box some '*proposals for publication*,' which he desired might be communicated to the public through the medium of my paper; at the same time presenting me with a very copious specimen of the work he had undertaken. He reflected on the honour of such a distinction, 'but he was naturally partial to rising merit; and Gregory Griffin might see a period when he himself should exist only in his writings.'

In the course of conversation my new acquaintance became extremely communicative; desired my opinion of a preface and dedication, and whether he should prefix it to an improved edition of *Sleidan de quatuor imperiis*, or *Girton's Complete Pigeon Fancier*; but upon recollection, resolved upon an Ode which he had lately composed *On the Use of Acorns in Consumptive Cases*.

Having occasion in the course of conversation to remark the number of classical scholars produced in our public seminaries, and the comparative paucity of those who have directed their attention to the cultivation of their native language, my friend regarded the cause as extremely evident; 'there were several assistances which the classical composer enjoyed, which—but all these difficulties I should see obviated in his *New Dictionary of Rhymes;* it was a work, which had cost him considerable labour and study. Those of his predecessors,——*Bysshe*, *Gent*, and others, were mere farragos, in which sound only was consulted, without any nicety of taste or accuracy of selection. This chaos, this rude and undigested mass, he had reduced to order, by selecting the rhymes proper for every possible subject; and reducing them to systematical arrangement. However, as this scheme must be unavoidably retarded by the prosecution of his former project, he should be peculiarly happy to see his system familiarly explained and illustrated in some of my future lucubrations.' This request, from an earnest desire I entertained of assisting young practitioners in the pleasing art of poetry, I immediately complied with; however, as I did not fully comprehend his system, I took the liberty of transcribing the following passages from my author's manuscript.

'For the eclogue or pastoral dialogue, let the student conclude his lines with the rhymes underwritten; always taking care to finish his sense with the second rhyme, and at no time to suffer his verse to exceed the just measure of ten syllables. The rhymes for this pnrpose be these:

——————— shady brake
——————— Licidas awake.
——————— careless rove
——————— leafy grove.

——————— fruitful field
——————— harvest yield.
——————— tuneful measures,
——————— harmless pleasures.
——————— nymphs and swains,
——————— flowery plains, &c.

Should our student turn his thoughts to panegyric, we would advise that he adhere to the endings we have here prescribed, as

The muse
A tributary——refuse
good and great
ordained by fate
noble line
race divine
great——heir
peculiar care, &c.

If the practitioner should perchance be possessed of a great fund of humour, and be inclined to employ his wicked wit in ridiculing the clergy, we would admonish him to adhere to the following terminations, in order as they are appointed, being careful only to confine his lines to eight syllables.

——————— musty
——————— rusty
——————— college
——————— knowledge
——————— Farce on
——————— Parson
——————— vicar
——————— liquor
——————— ease
——————— fees
——————— fire
——————— squire
——————— tale
——————— ale
——————— spouse
——————— carouse
——————— breed
——————— feed.

Should the public approve of this specimen of my friend's abilities, I may perhaps in some future

paper present them with a sample of his projected publication.—D.

N° 36. MONDAY, JULY 16, 1787.

———Neglectum adhibere clientem.—JUV.
A long neglected client to admit.—DRYDEN.

I FEEL myself so much obliged by the continued notice of my correspondents, that I should consider myself as highly ungrateful, if I did not sometimes leave wholly to them the weekly entertainment of our readers.

Ἡδὲ τρίτηγε καὶ ΜΕΣΗ τῶν εἰρημένων δυοῖν Ἁρμονιων ἡν ΚΟΙΝΗΝ καλῶ σπανειτε κυρίου καὶ ΚΡΕΙΤΤΟΝΟΣ Ὀνόματος, σχῆμα μέν ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει κεκέραται δέ πως ἐξ ἐκείνων μετρίως. ΚΑΙ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΕΚΑΟΤΗ ΤΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΕΚΑΤΕΡΑ ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΩΝ ΔΙΟΝΥΣ: Περι ΣΥΝΘ: Τμ: κδ.

'But this third and MIDDLE of the two styles already mentioned, which from want of a better name I call the *common*, has no peculiar dress of its own; but is composed equally of both the other, and is, as it were, *a selection of the beauties of each*.'

'To GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'SIR,

'As being commendably and successfully engaged in the same track, perhaps you will accept this Vindication of an illustrious predecessor, in the province of a periodical essayist; the inventor of that happy mode of imparting knowledge, of cultivating taste, and of recommending virtue.

'I therefore make use of the medium of your paper to entreat the public clemency in favour of an author, who though more than pasable for his day, is in danger of being absolutely eclipsed by the tran-

scendent radiance of these modern luminaries; or, to speak with antiquated simplicity, whose supposed purity of style is falling into contempt, from a comparison with the perfect models exhibited by the Johnsonian school,—though of that school the more characteristic merit perhaps be "*turgid Eloquence*," expressed in a style which no inferior genius could harmonize with such eloquence; "*a style refined to a degree of immaculate purity*." You see, Sir, that when deviating into the silly plainness of the unpolished days of Anne, I exalt my phrase and reinforce my style by calling in auxiliaries of a nobler port and gigantic elevation; auxiliaries, who, by the union of incompatible qualities may consistently be accounted potent beyond the limits of possibility. But 'till a perfect uniformity of style be established among men, 'till the "want of a consecutive series of senses in their nature collateral, when the radical idea branches into parallel ramifications" shall be tunefully lamented by the maidens, and significantly recited by the lisping babes, the rude and the ignorant, in their advancement to a happier cultivation, may be permitted to indulge themselves with an occasional page of ADDISON. It is indeed for this unfortunate writer, that I dare to plead; notwithstanding he is convicted of two such faults in style (if one be not rather of the sentiment), as would render any one who has written so long since, and upon such subjects, utterly unworthy to be read—"feebleness and inanity." I will not say, that to those who walk on stilts, a natural walk may appear a feeble one; or that where there is nothing gross, nothing crowded, nothing out of its place, the medium pure, the object of aerial brightness, it may be lost to some in the simplicity of its own light; like the sky of a summer's evening, without clouds or mist. I will not say this, because it must occur to critics who are so accomplished, as to see

Addison so far beneath them. But I must say something respecting the "MIDDLE STYLE" of which he is ironically accused. For the formidable censor, *ex Cathedrâ*, thus pronounces, "I am not willing to deprive him of the honour implied in Johnson's testimony, that *his prose is the model of the Middle Style;* but if he be but a Mediocrist, he is surely not a subject of imitation; it being a rule, that of examples, the best are always to be selected."

'Now here I must move in arrest of judgment, "for that in the record there is manifest error," and shall contend, with certainty of success, that, upon the face of the indictment, *no crime is charged;* that he is perhaps the only instance in our virtuous days, of a person indicted and convicted of a virtue. But "the Middle Style" is first taken as synonymous with "the middling one," and *that* being equivalent to *indifferent, low, vulgar,* &c. Addison is concluded to have been thus an author of the Middle Style. But, Sir, the word is a word of good fame and honourable estimation. It shall not, like the innocent Quaker, be brought under the disgrace of prostitution, because another word of very different character appears habited like it.

'If I were to call my witnesses to its reputation, I could fill the court with the first literary worthies, from Aristotle, to Harris of Salisbury. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Longinus, Hermagenes, Quintilian, Cicero himself, at once the commender and the great example—are perpetual in its praise. The ΜΕΣΗ, ΚΟΙΝΗ Αξις, the *æquabile et temperatum dicendi Genus,* has Homer, Isocrates in his best productions, Demosthenes in parts of his most finished compositions; Plato in a variety of beautiful instances; Xenophon in his general character; Virgil and Livy, for its examples; it is placed in literature as the golden mean in ethics; the virtue be-

tween the extremes of the austere and the luxuriant. The sons of Eton, those who have been formed by a Barnard or a Foster; those who now listen to a Davies,—have this evidence already in their breasts. But, Sir, I call no witnesses: I am not moving for a new trial upon a verdict by misdirection and against evidence—though upon that I must proceed, if this were denied me:—but I plead in arrest of judgment; that there is no crime on the record. That the legal sense of the Middle Style is perfectly ascertained in the courts of criticism; and were it necessary to cite a written authority in affirmance of the common law of good sense and taste in so clear a case, I would cite one which would be acknowledged by the judge, who has pronounced this sentence, to be equal to an act of parliament; though it be but an ordinance or a proclamation of the late literary monarch.—The words of Johnson himself deciding on Addison. "His prose is the model of the *Middle Style.*"—"On grave subjects not formal; on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration. Always equable, and always easy: without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous; but never blazes with unexpected splendour;—if his language had been less idiomatical (this is his adoption of vulgar phrase) it would have lost something of its genuine Anglicism. *He is never feeble;* and he did not wish to be energetic: he is never rapid, and he never stagnates. His sentences have neither studied amplitude, nor affected brevity. His periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an *English Style,* must give his days and nights to the volumes of *Addison.*"

'This is the Middle Style, for which Addison is to

be condemned, in the sense of the very author from whom censure is inferred; supposed latent in the use of this expression. This is the feebleness! and were I to speak to the inanity imputed, I might cite the fine passage which precedes that which I have transcribed, and in which Addison is deservedly honoured as a teacher of moral wisdom, of rational religion, in every interesting, every engaging form, which attractive fiction can lend, or the simple elegance of truth, present. Of the true, the graceful, and the virtuously conciliating in domestic life, he was not less a teacher; with a persuasive ease, a delicacy, a pathetic mildness, whose influence can never be entirely without effect on the heart of any of his readers. I would appeal to his Visions of Mirza; to his Allegory on the origin of the connexion between Pain and Pleasure extended to a noble conclusion from the idea hinted by Socrates; to his essay on Religion and on Prayer, for the higher instances; to his character of Ruricola and the Cornelii; to the serious and sentimental part of his inimitable portrait of the good Old Knight; and a variety of his other compositions, adapted to all the social offices between individuals, for the rest. Nor, as a critic, can he ever be meanly valued: whether we regard his merit of introducing Milton to popular notice, more extensively than would otherwise have been effected even by the approbation of Sommers; or his essays on the Pleasures of Imagination, to which modern refinement of investigation may yet find itself much obliged, and modern elegance of style may be challenged to no easy competition. I might appeal again to Johnson; but to vouch external testimony in proof of such excellence, borders on the charge of ridiculous anxiety,—it is

> To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To throw a perfume on the violet.

'For one hint, as it is given by Johnson, I shall make no apology. "Addison is now despised by some, who perhaps never would have seen his defects, but by the light he afforded them." Yet I hope it is by some only, and that many retain their veneration to a name to which our language, our taste, our manners, are singularly indebted; and who, first of our English writers, presented virtue to our view, introduced by cheerfulness, and attended by the graces. I am, Sir, yours most respectfully,

An ETONIAN.'

'To G. GRIFFIN, Esq.

Saltantem spectes, et chironomonta volanti
Cultello———————
———————Nec minimo sanè discrimine refert,
Quo gestu lepores, et quo gallina secetur.—JUVEN. Sat. 5.

The carver dancing round each dish surveys,
With flying knife, and as his art directs
With proper gestures every fowl dissects;
A thing of so great moment to their taste,
That one false slip had surely marr'd the feast.—DRYDEN

'DEAR SIR,

'Warm as I have been in my admiration of your excellent work, there was a sentiment in a late paper of yours, which struck me more forcibly than any I had ever seen, as more perfectly according with my own ideas. "There is nothing," you say, "however inconsiderable, from which morality may not be derived." This, Sir, is an opinion, to which from my childhood I have been particularly attached. If the stories of my nurse may be believed, I have often appeared totally wrapped up in reflections on my rattle, and sat whole hours in profound meditation on a saucepan of pap.

'An ingenious friend of mine, whose opinions are remarkably congenial with my own, who exercises

the laudable profession of a tailor, called upon me a few days ago with a bundle of papers in his hand; which he informed me were tracts, poems, dissertations, tragedies, &c. of his own composition. I own I was at first preparing to rebuke my friend for quitting the more honourable employment of cutting out coats and breeches, for that of stitching together a parcel of rhimes, or cabbaging materials for a dissertation. In short I began seriously to expostulate with him on his temerity, and to recall his exertions from the pen to the needle. My good friend, smiling with a look of compassion for my ignorance, informed me, "that these two instruments mutually assisted each other; that the same pieces of cloth furnished him with materials for a new coat, and a new composition; and that, in short, he stitched as an author, and wrote as a tailor." I was a good deal surprised at this account, till, upon looking over my friend's manuscripts, I found among many others the following titles; "*A treatise on sewing, with a comparison between a pair of shears and a lord chancellor.*" "*Tailoring considered in a moral and philosophical light.*" "*The plot discovered or hell in an uproar,*" a tragedy. "*View of men and manners, as taken from a tailor's board.*" "*Directions for cutting-out,*" a didactic poem; and a variety of others of the same nature. What a blessing, Mr. Griffin, would it be for this country, if every body would imitate the example of this gentleman; and make either their pleasures, or their business, subservient to nobler pursuits. We might then expect a generation of poetical green-grocers, metaphysical cork-cutters, and philosophical tallow-chandlers. We should then all be like the gamester, who to the surprise of a large congregation, brought into church a pack of cards instead of a prayer-book; and on being reprimanded, proved, that the cards, in the light he considered them, answered every purpose of

the liturgy. For if the haberdasher, when rolling up his small wares, would consider them in an astronomical view, and the cheesemonger, when surrounded by *Stilton and double-Gloucester*, regard his goods as subjects for philosophy; there would be nothing wanting to render the former a *Newton* and the latter a *Socrates*.

'For my own part, Sir, I have not the happiness of exercising any of the trades in question, and therefore cannot myself apply them to the purposes of morality. But you must know, Sir, the chief delight of my life is——*good eating*; nor am I ashamed to own myself a GLUTTON; since I can at the same time boast that I am a moralizing one. As I swallow with remarkable expedition, I have usually done dinner before the rest of the company; and in order to fill up the vacant time, amuse myself with observing the manœuvres of some one who still continues eating. An inexperienced person can have no idea of the fund of knowledge and improvement which such speculation affords; nor can they at all conceive the many useful lessons and rules for my future conduct, which I collect, merely from observing the knife and fork ranging from one part of the plate to the other; industriously collecting the different substances, and piling up the fat on the meat, the sallad on the fat, the gravy on the sallad, and the salt on the gravy. When I see this delicious pyramid descend the throat, it reminds me of a poet, who heaps tropes upon episodes, similies upon tropes, and catastrophes on similies; and at last sees the whole fabric destroyed by the tooth of the critic. If the unfaithful fork happens to let go his cargo just as the mouth is opening for its prey, what a melancholy picture does this accident present, of the uncertainty and vicissitude of all human affairs! How strongly does it bring to my mind that trite but excellent maxim, of πολλα μεγαξυ πελει κυλικος

και χειλεος ακρου, "many things happen between the cup and the lip?" By this means, Mr. Griffin, you perceive that my fondness for eating is of eminent advantage to my mind and morals; since the same ingredients afford wholesome food to my stomach, and wholesome reflections to my heart.

'If this letter should meet with a favourable reception, I will, in a short time, send you a very elaborate dissertation on carving, which was composed "*intercisivo tempore*," that is, between the first and second course. I remain,

Your most devoted servant,

Σοφος Πολυφαγος.'

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Semicolon is received—I will venture to give *Quintus* the piece of advice which Horace gave to his namesake, *ne percuncteris.*

N° 37. MONDAY, JULY 23, 1787.

O! curas hominum! O! quantum est in rebus inane.
PERSIUS.

How anxious are our cares, and yet how vain.—DRYDEN.

WHEN philosophy, affecting to exclaim thus on the vanity of human pursuits and knowledge, and the emptiness of human glory, sings the praises of retirement and seclusion from society, I cannot suppress the smile which arises at the mock solemnity of the declaration; and have sufficient ill-nature to suspect, that the sentiment has been dictated by that very vanity, which it seemingly despises. I believe that none are found to be more warmly attached to that perishable frailty (as they call it) fame, than those who outwardly neglect it.—They may do it

with safety;—by the singularity of affecting to deprecate what others value so highly, they are certain of attracting the attention of mankind. If these men are sincere and speak the real sentiments of their hearts, let them not be disturbed in their favourite retirement; their opinions are harmless, and will have but little influence on the world at large. But let them extend to others that toleration, which is granted to themselves. If their quiet is not envied by the great, let them not impede the more active pursuit of others; if their cottage is left untouched, they should not attempt to destroy the palace which another is rearing; they may rest assured the world will not molest them, if they do not molest the world; in spite of their outcries, men will follow their different pursuits with the same ardour, and by endeavouring to deter them, they only betray their own impotence. The truth is, that in the great maze of life each may pursue his own path without fear of interrupting his neighbour; the roads are numerous, and broad enough, for us to pass without crowding each other. As each man has his particular turn, his favourite pursuit, he may follow it. I only wish he would not abuse his neighbour for choosing a different track. There is nothing more common, at the same time nothing more absurd, or a more infallible mark of a narrow understanding, than to condemn every pursuit but your own, and depreciate every study in comparison with some beloved object; surely the disposition, which refuses to mix with any but that of a similar texture, is not only uncharitable and unsociable, but ridiculous.

Every man must be a competent judge of what is most consonant to his own inclinations; and as every man must undoubtedly wish for happiness, it follows, that he will pursue the means which he thinks the most likely to attain it. The philosopher

and the active man in their different pursuits must each feel a pleasure, which the other is incapable of tasting. The contented soul of the one shrinks from the dangers and the tempests to which ambition is exposed; and the turbulent spirit of the other sickens at the thought of a calm, wherein all his powers are rendered useless and inert.

The question is now reduced to this point, 'Of the different means by which we pursue happiness, which is the most likely to gain its end?' I must here observe, that as things are generally in extremes, both the active and inactive have pushed their opinions too far; if the one has too much phlegm, the other has too much fire; and as all extremes destroy themselves by too eager a pursuit of a favourite object, we often miss our aim. The man who, in chase of pleasure, plunges into the excesses of debauchery, or he who, in the rigour of his morality, obstinately rejects all pleasures, and morosely secludes himself from society, lest he should be contaminated, have in the eye of wisdom equally been misled. Him who considers fame as not worth possessing, or him who rests his whole happiness on the gaze of the multitude, such, as having entirely mistaken their ends, I exclude from the question, as wishing to confine it to those, who pursue their inclinations with moderation, and found them on rational principles. On the first view the retired man seems to proceed on the surer grounds. His happiness depends upon himself alone; his resources are contained within himself, and consequently are not exposed to the vicissitudes, which a man of the world must inevitably experience. The latter is liable to have his schemes thwarted, and projects defeated, by those whose interests clash with his. His ill fortune, the treachery of a friend, or the ingratitude of his country, may deprive him of the reward of his labours, and leave him destitute

in the evening of his days, when his powers are exhausted, and he is no longer able to cope with the difficulties which surround him.

This is all specious, perhaps true: but let us take the reverse of the scene.—The calm contented happiness which is to roll for years, 'in the noiseless tenor of its way' is, I believe to be found only in the raptures of poetry, what is *called* philosophy, and enthusiasm. For the first, fiction is its peculiar province; for the second, it is a *Utopian* scheme, which has never been realized; and who regards the mad reveries of an enthusiastic visionary? This calm, half-animated existence pleases from novelty in speculation: the man who has been tossed in a tempest, is delighted for a time with the tranquillity of a calm; but who wishes to stagnate in a calm for ever? the same revolution of the same objects in eternal succession, without change or variety, must fatigue at last; our stock of ideas in such a situation are soon exhausted; the mind ceases to dwell with delight on objects (though beautiful in themselves), which she has so often contemplated, and with whose perfections she is minutely acquainted. She is convinced of the truth of the inference she has drawn from those objects; and as she has viewed them in every light they are capable of being viewed in, can we wonder that she wishes for a change? Have we never examined a beautiful prospect till our sight is satiated, and our curiosity exhausted? The mind in retirement loses much of its elasticity, by wanting that stimulus, which the hopes and fears of a busy life continually supply. It is variety, so entirely lost in retirement, which gives us fresh spirits to proceed; and which serves as a spur to awaken us from satiety and languor.

'*Never less alone than when alone*' is the splendid sentiment of a *Roman* hero, and has been the uni-

versal motto of the advocates of retirement. It is a noble sentiment, and worthy of the great man from whom it fell. But it should be remembered, that this truly illustrious hero was not the mere recluse. *Scipio* was eminent amongst the most eminent, universally acknowledged a statesman, general, scholar, and philosopher; by a felicity rarely attained he blended the opposite qualities of an active life, and a philosophic ease. Perhaps after all this altercation, the dispute, like most others of the same kind, must be settled by a composition; and the man who like *Scipio* can unite such opposite virtues, is the character we ought to imitate.

If the world was entirely filled with the bustling and ambitious, such would be the tumult, that anarchy and confusion must inevitably prevail; if with philosophers only, life would stagnate, and its scenes be rendered insipid. At present they are as a mutual check on each other, by which the proper balance is kept between them; the reproof of the one restrains the licentiousness into which the other, unless so curbed, might be apt to fall; and the supercilious pride, which philosophy is apt to indulge against those who are not of her sect, is checked by the contempt that pride is sure to meet with from the opposite and far more numerous party.—*Cowley*, who had tried the promised felicity of retirement, regretted the loss of that society which he had voluntarily abandoned.

To regulate but not suppress the efforts of ambition, is a task worthy of true philosophy; but surely to obstruct the growth of knowledge, by inculcating 'that all knowledge is vanity,' is not so laudable an undertaking. This at once strikes at the root of all desire to exert that mental superiority, which is the attribute of men alone. If we are prepossessed with this notion, who will sacrifice his health, and wear out his abilities in pursuit of that whose end is

vanity? For who is willing to labour in vain, or to sow where he has no prospect of reaping? I cannot be persuaded that the desire of knowledge, which is so universally prevalent in man, could be implanted in us only to torment us; only to convince us, that after years of fruitless toil, that toil might have been spared, as no advantage could be derived from it. Those who attend only to the minutiæ of science, may with reason be reproved, as directing their attention to trifles, whilst they leave the more important parts unexamined; but surely the discoveries of *Newton*, or the essays of *Locke*, are not to be considered as the effusions of ignorance under the disguise of knowledge? Has man been declared the lord of this lower world, has he been endowed with all his various faculties, and has nature implanted in him his various passions, that he may be the laughing stock of superior beings? Is it not his duty, rather, as being placed here in a state of probation, to exert, not to bury, his talents? To me at least it is plain, that such would be the wish of every rational being.

It is no easy task to trace these pretended philosophers through the different links which connect their system. Even *Socrates* himself, wise and good as he was, is not entirely free from the fault which infected his brethren. The confession 'that the summit of his knowledge was, that he knew nothing,' was the effect of vanity, concealed under the mask of pretended humility. 'I don't know how it is,' said *Phryne*, 'these men may talk of their wisdom and their temperance, but they knock at my door as often as other men.' The exemption from the passions other men are subject to, which they claim as the privilege of their sect, was surely only an empty boast. What *Tacitus* said of *Augustus* refusing the empire, may be equally applied to their outward neglect of fame, '*Imperium specie recusantis*

flagrantissimè cupiverat.' 'Under the mask of a refusal, he concealed the most eager desire of obtaining the imperial dignity.' '*Of all the cants in this canting world, the cant of hypocrisy*' and false philosophy, which are nearly allied, is not only *the worst*, but the most *tormenting*.—A.

N° 38. MONDAY, JULY 23, 1787.

Mos pro lege.

Custom is a second nature.—MONTAIGNE.

NOTWITHSTANDING I feel the disadvantages under which I labour, in treating of a subject so happily, and so much more ably handled by most of my predecessors in this way of writing, yet by throwing some new light on the old materials, I shall hope to engage the attention of my readers. Those females who honour my lucubrations with their perusal, will excuse me, if perchance some lettered beau shall have informed them, that my English motto is not exactly the translation of the Latin one, and will, rather than censure me, be candid enough to call the book of proverbs to an account, for not furnishing me with a better.

Custom has been very justly termed the parent of those many absurdities, to which we are every day witnesses, but which, from their frequency, become so familiar, that we can look upon them '*siccis oculis*,' and with the same indifference as on the most rational occurrences of life. It is the hinge, upon which the manners of the world in general, and the peculiarities of each nation turn. What are termed the laws of honour, have the sanction of CUSTOM only to plead in their behalf. What else could so

directly have opposed them to justice? It is by some author, I know not whom, observed, that it is considered as disgraceful in a man who conceives his honour injured, to apply to the laws of his country for redress! and yet if he has recourse to any other expedient, he is punished by those laws which he has slighted. The *high Court of Custom* has prescribed one remedy, justice another: this has reason for its support, that violence; this makes an appeal to the long robe, that to the short cloak. Nay, the very facetious author, from a translation of whose essays I have taken my English motto, goes much farther in his assertions of the power of *Custom:* He would wish to persuade us, that the laws of conscience, which all writers without hesitation seem to agree in attributing to nature, proceed merely from *Custom:* from the almost innate veneration we feel for opinions received among our countrymen; and from which, consequently, we cannot depart without reluctance, nor adhere to without self-approbation. Nor is *Custom* alone dictator in the more essential occurrences of life, but even directs the most trivial alterations of dress, phrase, and the etiquette of good breeding. Our very polite neighbours are certainly guilty of *grossierètes* even in their most refined and polished conversation, even in the humanizing society of the fair, which would shock the most rugged *English* ear, and force the blush into the cheek of modesty, especially when unused to the so frequent repetition of them. And yet these same people would reprobate the idea of the smallest contradiction to the most ridiculous assertions, or differing in the least from the most prejudiced opinions. It has been observed, that lying and perjury are not vices with the French, but '*only a way of speaking.*'

Perhaps I cannot bring forward a stronger instance of the prejudices arising from custom, than

the very extraordinary method of ploughing, known certainly to have been adopted by the Irish, who, from a long practice of tying their horses' tails to the plough, were so bigoted to the custom, that nothing but an absolute order (nay I believe an act of parliament) could persuade them of the superior ease and convenience of harness. Mr. Pennant, if I am not mistaken, in his tour, mentions a no less singular prejudice of the Scotch. The poorer highlanders were so accustomed to a ground-floor only, that it was not till after much obstinate resistance, they could be convinced of the advantage of additional stories; and even then they were so positive in their refusal to ascend a staircase within the house, that it was actually built externally. Every one is acquainted with the dread the Russians had of inoculation, though they saw the ravages of the natural small-pox, 'till their empress with a courage peculiar to herself, convinced them of its safety, by submitting first herself to the operation. And yet this method was long before practised with success in Turkey, under the name of ingrafting the disease. I cannot but here repeat what I have before observed, how custom familiarizes objects, at first sight the most disgusting to us. And here, gentle and benevolent reader, you will pardon my addressing one of my correspondents in particular, whose case, as censor-general of this little world, I think myself in duty bound to consider, and I have given it the consideration it deserves. Let then *Vir Bonus* frequently repeat his ride through our territories, and in case of molestation, let him plead the promise which I now solemnly (though exclusively) give him of the omission of the thistle. Let him take every opportunity of submitting his deformities to the inspection of my very facetious fellow-citizens, and let him be assured that they will gradually wear off; and that even a brown buz-wig, a light blue coat,

and (though much the most durable stain about him) black everlasting breeches may, at length through custom be incorporated into our ideas of humanity. Let him not however be impatient at the length of the process; let him not in despair of success put a period to his miserable existence. The little I have seen of this wicked world convinces me, that with a little more experience I shall like it very well; let him reflect only on the magnitude of his offence,—that he is a *Quiz*, and rather let him console himself with the reflection, that be he at present never such a '*tough one*,' custom may in course of time render him almost '*perfectus ad unguem*,' *as neat as my nail*.

Montaigne has entertained his readers with a collection of the most laughable, and yet the most opposite customs that he could pick up from this or any other nation, and by placing them in a very ridiculous point of view, he almost extorts from us a resolution, to make use of our own reason, in preference to vulgar prejudice, as our guide through life. There have been many, who have eagerly embraced the greatest hardships, merely to discover the extent of their patience; and to endeavour by practice to lighten and familiarize them. Some have abandoned their riches to exercise themselves in a voluntary poverty; others courted labour, and the austerity of a painful life, to inure themselves to misfortune and fatigue. These, and more than these, merely by a resolute perseverance, they at length overcame; and not only by custom were taught to tolerate, but even to take a pleasure in them. But such men as these are not to be deemed the authors of all the frivolous customs we see daily here and every where dispersed through the globe; customs which have not even the sanction of a mistaken virtue to support them, but which are the effects, either of the capricious whims of the

few, or of the impenetrable ignorance of the many. Whoever would disengage himself from these unaccountable prejudices, will, by a little observation discover, how many things are received without scruple among the multitude, which have not the smallest foundation in nature or reason; and when this mask of prejudice is thrown aside, will be spleened to think, how long he has himself been an accomplice in blinding the eye of his judgment, and in concurring in opinions the most vulgar and contemptible.

To this powerful agent in all human affairs, the *true-born Englishman* is indebted for many of the privileges which he so exclusively enjoys, and which nothing but so absolute an authority as that of custom can justify. Of these not the least is the noble art of SWEARING, which, as I have more fully descanted on it in a former paper, I shall at present leave to reap the benefits of the improvements so liberally laid down by me. Rather than relinquish any one of these rights, the sturdy *Briton* will stand forth the protector of his own and countrymen's liberty, like the old Gascons against Charlemagne, who were so attached to their systematic rudeness and ignorance, that they boldly asserted an exclusive privilege of stupidity, when he first attempted to introduce among them the Latin language and imperial laws. Hence also that *remnant of manhood*, the Tailor, upon revolving festivals of Christmas and Easter, buttons up his knees, draws on his shoes, and descending from the deserted board, puts in a claim for every privilege of humanity,' by grinning, in imitation of the rational faculty of laughter, and '*by holding up his head like a man.*' I remember a friend of mine who had so accustomed himself to talk in the horse-dealing phrase, that I really think he could convey his ideas by no other channel. He was once prescribing me a remedy

for a sprained hip, '*Aye*,' said he, 'we *must fire you on the round bone, and give you a winter's run*.' Upon my expressing some surprise at this address, he loudly exclaimed against my ignorance, swearing at the same time that he believed I should not know a *snaffle from a curb*.

I shall subjoin to these remarks a letter from one of my correspondents, not very foreign from my subject.

'DEAR GREG,

'Having occasion to travel a few weeks since on the north road, I was not a little surprised at being charged by the postilion for twenty miles, when the real distance was but seventeen. Upon my remonstrating, the boy allowed what I said, but they never charged, he said, on that stage by the mile stones, but by the old '*time out of mind*' custom of the house. Upon so barefaced a declaration, I instantly paid him the money, assuring him at the same time, that though I was obliged to submit to *his custom*, I never would in future trouble him with *mine*. Your opinion of the repartee, will much oblige,

Dear Greg,

Your constant reader and admirer,

M. MISOETHUS.'

The reader may more easily conceive, that I can express the extreme sorrow with which I inform the public of the indisposition under which Mr. GRIFFIN now labours. It has been, alas! for some time the opinion of the most able physicians, that he could not outlive *forty*;—if so, two weeks, 'two little weeks with wings of down' (as the poet says), will terminate his existence, as the Guardian, the Censor, and the Instructor, of the Little World. He seems indeed, to be fully sensible of his situation; so much so, that he commissioned me to make it known to

the public; and to inform his correspondents at the same time, that it is his earnest desire, that they would send in to him without delay, their names, and the claims they have to their respective compositions, that he may be able to do them justice in his last will and testament. He is happy that he can attribute his approaching end to no other than natural causes. He had indeed, some time ago, a kind of paralytic affection, which totally deprived him of the use of one half of his body; but to this (though I cannot indeed pronounce him quite recovered of it) I can by no means ascribe his alas-I-fear-too-quickly-approaching end. *Tant mieux*, as the French have it, 'so much the better,' we are all mortal men, high and low, rich and poor, all must die one time or another; and of this Mr. GRIFFIN seems well aware; for though, for some space of time, one half of his body was of no manner of service to him, he always kept up his spirits. Should Mr. GRIFFIN recover, I may be allowed to exclaim with the poet, '*Arma virumque cano*,'—but *τον δ' απαμειβομενος*, 'if the worst comes to the worst,' I shall have the satisfaction to reflect, that I have done my duty in warning the public of their approaching loss,—and then—but the dejection of my spirits will not suffer me to make any other remarks on so melancholy a subject, than that complete sets of the MICROCOSM, or any single number, may be had as usual of THE EDITOR.

Castle-street, Windsor, July 23, 1787.

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N° 39. MONDAY, JULY 30, 1787.

Non omnis morior—OVID.
I die not all.——GARTH.

DEBILITATED as I am with sickness, I feel that I shall not be able to entertain my readers, as usual, with a calm discussion of topics not the most immediately interesting. I feel plainly that I am no longer a man of *this World*. And that being the case, I think it incumbent on me to leave my fellow-citizens some knowledge of the Life of one, whose writings have been dedicated to their service.

A life indeed of so short duration, as that of GREGORY GRIFFIN, cannot be supposed to have been replete with any uncommon incidents; or to have abounded with any surprising adventures. It has, as may be imagined, been checkered rather by a variety of sentiments, than situations; and owes its diversification rather to a succession of ideas, than a series of events.

Yet even in these, I flatter myself, that my fellow-citizens will find themselves interested; and that they will be solicitous to become acquainted even with the most trivial circumstances, which concern one, to whom they are indebted, if not for instruction and entertainment, at least for an earnest desire to instruct and entertain.

Of my birth and parentage I shall say nothing; for, from an account of either, no instruction could be gathered. Of my education—the first circumstances, which I have any recollection of, are, that I was, at the age of six years, employed in learning the rudiments of my mother tongue, spinning cock-chafers on corking-pins, and longing for bread

and butter, at a day-school, near ———. My proficiency here was so great, that I actually got through, within a month, by far the greater part a gingerbread alphabet, and might be literally said to devour my learning with an astonishing avidity. In my hours of relaxation from study, the utmost stretch of my intellects was the acquisition of the aforesaid bread and butter; the highest notion I could conceive of rational amusement, was enjoyment of that delight, which arose from the contemplation of the above-mentioned cock-chafer, writhing, or, as I then, in compliance with the custom of my schoolfellows, termed it, *preaching*, in the agonies of impalement. And yet, my temper, gentle reader, is not cruel; my disposition, would you believe me, is far from tyrannical. But the abuse of power is equally prevalent among children and men. And when we every day find, by melancholy experience, that the strongest intellects, and the maturest judgments, are unable to resist the intoxication of uncontrolled command, and rioting in the plenitude of power, break through the laws of reason and of right, can we expect that the sense, of childhood should be less frequently fascinated, and less easily overcome; and that, when armed with the ability of distributing life and death to the subject tribes of animals and insects, it should exercise its dominion with equity, and administer its charge without injustice? Not but, with regard to myself as well as others, the rage of despotism has been checked, and the triumphs of tyranny interrupted, by the admonitions of friendly advice and the interposition of parental authority. But, alas, how could I regard those admonitions, or revere that authority—when, after being severely chidden for wantonly dismembering a wasp, or knocking down a butterfly, I was often called upon to crush a spider, or trample an earwig to atoms, because forsooth, a lady in company had conceived a rooted horror for

the one, or was endowed with a natural antipathy to the other? Let the parent, who would keep his child pure from the stain of cruelty to animals, beware, how he makes him the executioner of his vengeance on even the most noxious; the crusher of spiders, and the trampler of earwigs. The distinctions of harmless and hurtful, are not to be explained to childhood. Self-preservation needs not the admonition.—The child who executes these commands, must, either if he does not reflect at all, be steeled by their repetition against the pleadings of pity: or if he does reflect, in what light can he consider them, but as dictated by the lust of destroying, cloaked indeed under the affectation of antipathy!

But to proceed in my narrative. My removal at the age of eight years to a *Grammar School*, at ———, as it changed my method of study, and enlarged my prospects of improvement in the belles letters, so did it give a totally new turn to the train of my ideas, and open a larger field for the exercise of my adventurous ambition. I set out with becoming a professed admirer, and would-be imitator, of the heroes of the head class; and wearied the good-natured patience of all my friends, relations, intimates, acquaintance, and visitors, during the first six vacations, by relating ten times a day, with a considerable degree of archness, and an infinite quantity of admiration, the tricks of *Tomlinson*, and the wickedness of *Wilkins;* and 'how *Spriggins* kicked the usher's shins under the table, and then said it was'n't he.' I called moreover into action my mimetic powers, and before the expiration of my eleventh year, was able to imitate, with no small share of success, the tone and manner of the writing usher, in pronouncing, '*Very vell, Master Simkins, I'll sartinly get you vipt for dartying on your breeches.*'—But the time was now arrived, when I was to be no longer the trumpeter of another's fame, the humble admirer of another's

achievements. Having attained the 'topmost round' of that learning which this seminary was capable of bestowing, and going on, as I was, in my twelfth year, I thought it time to aim at being the pattern of the excellence I had pictured; and to become myself the hero of my own celebration. Like the son of *Fingal*, I now resolved to sing the achievements of myself and my own companions.

> ———quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
> Et quorum pars magna fuit.

And if in the ardour of narration, I by chance, had drained the sources of reality, and emptied the stores of truth, I betook myself, without hesitation, to ransacking the riches of fiction; and trusted implicitly to the inexhaustible fertility of my own invention. Many a time have I entertained, or perhaps tired, an indulgent audience, with long accounts of my miraculous escapes from dangers of my own raising; and extricated myself, with admirable address, from situations of my own contriving. Often have I, for the sake of displaying my heroism, and telling a good story, endangered my precious neck, by leaping fancied ditches, and climbing imaginary walls, for the purpose of despoiling fictitious apple-trees, or non-existent gooseberry-trees.

Luckily for my safety, and perhaps for my reputation, I was rescued from the midst of these 'imminent deadly' dangers by a removal to *Eton*. From her to have 'sucked the milk of science,' to have contracted for her a pious fondness and veneration, which will bind me for ever to her interests; and perhaps (pardon, kind reader, the licensed vanity of a periodical writer abandoning himself on his death-bed to the fascination of egotism), to have improved by my earnest endeavours her younger part of the present generation, is to me a source of infinite pride and satisfaction.

But I find myself growing weak, and am unable

to proceed any farther. With the rest of my life, and how it has been employed, my fellow-citizens are sufficiently acquainted.—For my own part, I look back upon it with contentment;—but I must resign my pen to my *publisher* who will say whatever I have unsaid—that ought to be made known to my countrymen.—They will, I flatter myself, remember, not without esteem, the name of GREGORY GRIFFIN,—they will preserve a regard for his memory.—

Mr. GRIFFIN could not finish the sentence he was about; this last effort has quite exhausted him, and he has left to me the melancholy office of concluding his life.—Which, by-the-bye, if printed, with a neat type, in a thin octavo, and adorned with a well-looking title-page, would cut a very pretty figure in the annals of literature. I should, indeed, be a little in doubt whether to entitle it simply, The LIFE OF Mr. GRIFFIN, or The CONFESSIONS of Mr. GRIFFIN, or AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE AND WRITINGS, &c. but of that hereafter—*Tempus edax rerum.*—I find nothing among Mr. G.'s papers worthy of meeting the public eye; as I discovered, upon searching his breeches pockets since he went to bed, that they consist of, in his right hand pocket, his laundress's bill; in his fob, a piece of brown paper, containing one pennyworth of sugar-candy, of which he was wont to be very fond; and a small note to a friend, containing a positive declaration that he leaves behind him no writings whatsoever unpublished, but his Will, which he intends enjoining his executors to lay before his fellow-citizens after his decease.

It may be questioned, why, I, who must naturally entertain a veneration for his person, do not, now that so fair an opportunity offers itself, attempt something, just by way of a character or so; and it may be

suspected, that there is some reason for the omission; and to say truth, so there is. It must be confessed, that I have for some time intended (and have collected materials for the purpose), as the eyes of the world must infallibly be fixed on his exit, to favour it, after Mr. G's demise, with a collection of *Anecdotes, Stories, Smart Sayings, Witty Repartees. Funny Jokes, and Shining Sentiments*, under the comprehensive title of GRIFFINIANA.—Of this work the following extracts will give a sufficient specimen.

'Mr. GRIFFIN was a man of great humour, coming one day into the parlour, where *Pompey*, the *Editor's* little dog, was lying and basking before the fire, "I protest, *Pompey*," said he, "you are almost as lazy a dog as myself!!!"

'The voluntary sallies of Mr. GRIFFIN's wit were only to be equalled by the readiness of his repartees: of this the two following anecdotes, will give evidence.

'Mr. GRIFFIN, walking one day in the street, was suddenly accosted by a friend of his, who, pulling off his hat, addressed him with "How do you do, Mr. GRIFFIN?" Mr. GRIFFIN, without the smallest hesitation, or embarrassment, instantly retorted "Pretty well, I thank you, Sir; I hope you are well?"

'Another time Mr. GRIFFIN was attacked in a large company by a lady, who thinking to catch him unprepared, asked him very sharply, "how much two and two made?"—"Two and two, Madam," said he, with great quickness, and without betraying the smallest confusion, "make *four*."

I will be candid enough to own, that the idea of this publication was borrowed from one of a similar kind, on a man of almost equal eminence with him who is to be the subject of these memoirs. But though there may be a near resemblance between the anecdotes here set down, and some which are related of that gentleman, the reader will, I hope, have fairness

enough to think, that it is very possible that both should be original. I have however been once on the point of dropping the design, when it was represented to me by a friend, on whose judgment I had great reliance, 'that I should act unworthily as a biographer, and ungenerously as a friend, in endeavouring to reduce the name of Mr. GRIFFIN by such a publication to the level of *Joe Miller* and *Tom Brown;* and in rashly bringing to light, such uninteresting and trifling effusions of momentary mirth, or occasional levity, as would but detract from the weight of his other performances; and such, as from their own intrinsic merit, could only pass without ridicule, when they passed without public observation.'

B. THE EDITOR.

N° 40. MONDAY, JULY 30, 1787.

Amicorum munus est, quæ voluerit, meminisse,
———quæ mandaverit, exequi.—TACIT.

It is the office of our friends, to remember the requests of the deceased, and faithfully execute his commissions.

THE melancholy event predicted in a late number has taken place.—GREGORY GRIFFIN is no more.

About five minutes three seconds after nine o'clock on *Monday* evening, his friends were alarmed by a hasty summons to his bedside. The good gentleman seemed to be perfectly sensible that the moment of his dissolution drew near.

It has been usually customary with the biographers of eminent men, when drawing towards the conclusion of their hero's existence, to make the world acquainted with every little symptom attending his exit. But the effects of a cathartic, or the operation of an emetic, have been too minutely investigated, and too frequently discussed, to be any longer interest-

ing; the various circumstances of this kind which marked the termination of Mr. GRIFFIN's existence, would be of as little consequence to the literary as medical world. These therefore we shall omit mentioning.

'My friends!' said he, as we stood round him, raising himself a little on his left elbow, while the bookseller's boy placed a pillow under his head, *We knew there was but one way, for his nose was as sharp as a pen,*—'my friends,' said he, 'I could not quit *this world* satisfactorily to my own conscience, without acknowledging my obligations to you. I die, it is true, at an age, when I might, without presumption, have hoped for the enjoyment of a protracted existence. But I have long foreseen this event, and am happy to be prepared to meet it. It is a great consolation to me, that I leave you behind me, the defenders of my conduct, in that official character which I have during my life-time supported. It has been my endeavour to blend the instruction of my fellow-citizens with their entertainment; to temper my censure with lenity; and to laugh away their follies, rather than to scourge their vices. If, in any one of these points, my success has been equal to my wishes, the end of my existence is fully answered.

'It has indeed so happened, that contrary to my expectations, my name has found its way beyond the limits of our little republic. Even there, cast as I was on the *wide World*, I have met with such a reception, as to convince me, that the tendency of my plan has been warmly approved; however inadequate may have appeared its execution. And if by these means, I have added one more citizen to our commonwealth, or contributed to diffuse a patriotic love of *Eton* among its present members, then indeed shall I be proud to congratulate myself on the success of my endeavours.—But I feel my strength going from me.'—The publisher pulled out his pocket-handkerchief—'Adieu!'—the publisher applied his pocket-

handkerchief to his eyes. 'To your care I intrust my will,—you will find I have not forgotten you, my friends:—you will execute my commissions with fidelity.'—'Mr. GRIFFIN is dead,' said the bookseller,—'sure enough' said the bookseller's boy.—The printer's devil blubbered.—It was too much.—We were forced to retire to give vent to our feelings —and open the Will.—A copy of it we now lay before the public.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF

GREGORY GRIFFIN, Esq.

'Vicesimo tertio die JULII, anno regni GEORGII Tertii Magnæ Britanniæ, Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Regis, Fidei Defensoris, &c. vicesimo septimo; Domini, millesimo septingentesimo octogesimo septimo.

'I GREGORY GRIFFIN, of the College of Eton in the County of Bucks, being weak in body, but sound in understanding, on this twenty-third instant of this July present, in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of His Majesty George the Third, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, do hereby commit my body to the press, from whence it came; my spirit to the comprehension of my readers.

'Of my Worldly Effects, consisting chiefly of Essays, Poems, Letters, &c. &c.

'IMPRIMIS, I do give and bequeath the whole of the aforesaid Essays, Poems, Letters, &c. &c. to my much beloved friends J. SMITH, G. CANNING, R. SMITH, and J. FRERE; to be among them divided as shall be hereafter by me appointed; excepting only such legacies, as shall be hereafter by me assigned to other my worthy and approved friends.

'And I do farther constitute and appoint the aforesaid, my much-beloved friends, the Executors and Administrators of this my last Will and Testament, to divide my Effects, according to the form appointed therein.

'ITEM. I do Give and Bequeath to Mr. JOHN SMITH, late of the College of Eton, now of King's College, Cambridge, all my Papers, Essays, &c. &c. which bear the Signature of A.

'ITEM. To Mr. GEORGE CANNING, now of the College of Eton, I do give and bequeath all my Papers, Essays, &c. &c. signed with B.

'ITEM. To Mr. ROBERT SMITH, now of the College of Eton aforesaid, I do assign all my Papers, &c. &c. (as aforesaid) signed C.

'ITEM. I do make over to Mr. JOHN FRERE, now of the aforesaid College of Eton, all my Papers, &c. (as before mentioned) marked D.

'ITEM. To Mr. JOSEPH MELLISH, of Trinity College, Cambridge, in token of respect and esteem, I do assign the Paper bearing the signature of M.

'ITEM. To Mr. B. WAY, I do bequeath the Letter signed MUSIDORUS; to Mr. LITTLEHALES, the Letter CÆMETERIUS; to Lord H. SPENCER, the Letter and Poem of IRONICULUS, with the Letter of Σοφος Πολυφαγος.

'The rest of my Papers, &c. &c. here undisposed of, I do hereby enjoin my Executors, to make over to such of my Correspondents as shall severally make good their claims thereunto; declaring moreover, that all such Papers as do not bear any of the aforesaid signatures, A. B. C. or D. are not to be considered as the property of my Executors.

'Dated this twenty-third day of July present, in year, &c. &c. 1787. Signed

GREGORY GRIFFIN.'

Witnesses

CHARLES KNIGHT,

PHILIP NORBURY.

And now, in the character of Mr. GRIFFIN's Executors, having first rendered our thanks to the Public, for the great support which that gentleman has experienced from their candour and indulgence; it would be ungrateful, were we not in his name to express his more particular obligations, to a *World*, which he quits with so much regret.

Long may it flourish, as it has hitherto done, the Nursery of Heroes and Statesmen; of Poets and Philosophers; and may its Citizens, equally qualified to shine in the busy sphere of political eminence, or cultivate with taste the elegancies of literary retirement, ever look back with filial affection on the spot where they were formed for such noble, such elevated purposes.

May the Contemporaries of Mr. GRIFFIN, ever join with him in looking up with gratitude and veneration to the INSTRUCTOR of their youth, whose approbation has been equally the aim of all *their* puerile exertions. To him, as the source, from which their merit, if any, has originated, we now commend the Guardianship of these early efforts, begun under his auspices; and consequently with peculiar propriety intrusted to the continuance of such distinguished approbation.—B. & C.

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